

*Yaoi/Fiction/Erotica*  
US \$24.95

Riki the Dark: proud, defiant, and unapologetically vulgar and rude. The mongrel has vowed to submit to no one, least of all his Master, the illustrious Iason Mink. What will it take to tame the notorious wild boy of Midas? After over a year and a half of discipline and training, Iason has still not managed to turn the heart of the infamous mongrel from the slums. Or has he? Find out in Part II of Kira Takenouchi's *Taming Riki*.



**Rated  
ADULT  
MA 18+**



ISBN 0-9776872-1-X

5 24 95

9 780977 687213



# TAMING RIKI

KIRA TAKENOUCHI

VOL. I  
PART 2



# TAMING RIKI

VOLUME I - PART 2

間の楔



きら たけのうち

KIRA TAKENOUCHI

# Taming Riki



# Taming Riki

By Kira Takenouchi

Volume One

Part II

Yaoi Underground LLC

Bloomington, Indiana 47402

© 2006 by Kira Takenouchi and Yaoi Underground LLC

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be used or reproduced in any manner whatsoever without written permission, except in the case of brief quotations embodied in critical articles or reviews.

Published 2006 by Yaoi Underground LLC

Printed by A & A Printing in the United States of America

ISBN 0-9776872-1-X

Text © 2006 by Kira Takenouchi

Cover art © 2006 by Tata & Yaoi Underground LLC

Cover design © 2006 by P.L. Nunn & Yaoi Underground LLC

Inside color illustrations © 2006 by Tata & Yaoi Underground LLC

*Guide to Taming Riki* illustrations © 2006 by Ulla Nissinen & Yaoi Underground LLC

Map © 2006 by Harial & Yaoi Underground LLC

Visit [www.kirafics.net](http://www.kirafics.net) for other fiction by Kira Takenouchi.

For Rieko Yoshihara,  
For Her Vision

For Astrid,  
Who Is My Reason for Living

And Finally,  
This Book Is Dedicated  
In Loving Memory of  
Shiozawa Kaneto  
1954-2000

Also by Kira Takenouchi:  
Taming Riki Volume I, Part I

# Acknowledgements

I did it all by my bloody self, dammit. \*shakes fist\* Oh, all right. So I'll admit it, this book wouldn't have happened without the help of many others. In fact, I'd be in deep shit without my team of editors, assistants and proofreaders (erm...are we allowed to curse in the Acknowledgements? No? Well, guess what? It's my book, so I can curse if I fucking feel like it! ¿#@!&çò!f....)

Okay, now that I have that out of my system, I really *should* acknowledge my proofreaders and editors, especially Linda, Julia, and Margarita, who helped so much during the critical pre-press period, and also: Aarti, Anatra, Andrea, Beth, Brenda, Camellia, Carmen, Cin, Coral, Crystal, Harley, Heather, Hisui, Jessica, Jill, Lauren, Leah, Leighana, Lisa, Ferguson, Lynn, Michele, Nico, Nikki, Patti, Portia, Rida, Sara, Sherry, Shinashi, Teresa, and Trudy. Thanks also to Anatra for her help with the art, to Sherry for helping me format the bloody lovely book, and to Jill for her font suggestions.

Of course I must give special thanks to my newest Blondies, Aldariel, Alice, Anita, Anke, Annette, Barb, Betty Jo, Catherine, Charisa, Christine, Coral, Crystal F., Crystal T., Dawn, Diana, Elaine, Elizabeth, Emmanuelle, Harial, Jessica, Krystal, Lauren, Melissa, Miss Sage, Mo, Patti, Rebecca, Stephanie, Stacey, Sue, Sway, Teresa, Teija, Tricia, and Trudy, and my newest Elites: Amy, Jillian, Katey, Kayleigh, Lillyhawk, Lore, Miranda, Molly, Rin and Victoria.

Next I must bow before Tata and Ulla, both of whom contributed such brilliant art to the book, as well as Harial, who made the map in the Guide and who has assisted me in all sorts of ways this year, including building an incredible website and creating banners for me, even when I was a total bitch. Same goes for Zhy, who kept the forum going while I was busy editing. And I want to thank Tyler for helping with general site administration issues.

I guess I should also acknowledge my bishies, who are currently locked up in my basement (which is, um, legal where I live), and who provided (albeit reluctantly) carnal inspiration for many of my scenes.

And finally, I must acknowledge my lovely daughter Astrid, mostly because she threatened to hurt me if I didn't, but also because she had to put up with me hogging the computer and kicking her off when she was talking to her friends.



Okay so that wasn't really the final acknowledgement because now I'm on the back of this page.

By the way, any resemblance to real individuals or events in this book is, um, *entirely* coincidental, and all names have been changed to protect the identities of those who may possibly resemble characters in this book (mostly because I couldn't remember them anyway, I'm really bad with names).

Well, crap. What else am I going to acknowledge? I still have three-quarters of a page left. Let's see...all right then, I'll acknowledge that, while editing this book for publication, I had thirteen Special Kira Times.

I suppose I should also acknowledge that if my parents knew I write this stuff they would probably both have heart attacks.

And for the record, I acknowledge that I am, and will forever be, the humble servant of Rieko Yoshihara, whose timeless classic *Ai no Kusabi* is truly one of the greatest stories ever told.

Bloody hell. There's still space, dammit. And I can't think of anything else to acknowledge. So I guess I'll just fill up the rest of the page with random observations, since no one is probably reading this anyway. Oh! I thought of something to acknowledge, and it's that formatting this book for publication drove me freaking crazy! Like, especially the section headers and page numbers. I can't tell you how many times I almost threw my computer out the window. Hmmm....maybe I'll acknowledge that the guy who works in my office is a total bishie, with long hair and lovely chest muscles (which I can see even through his shirt). Maybe I'll have to abduct him and add him to my collection of bishies in my basement. I think he needs to be punished just for being so damned cute. I guess I'll also acknowledge that our President (GWB) is a total dickhead. I'm pretty sure freedom of speech allows me to say that, although I'm not completely sure we still have the Bill of Rights anymore. Oh! How could I forget? I must acknowledge all my readers, like *you*, without whom there would be no reason to publish this book (because, like, no one would buy it). So many of you have been so supportive and faithful to me and I really appreciate it. As some of you know I've had some health issues and a few close calls in the past few years, but I have to say your continued loyalty has been a real source of motivation for me. So thank you so much for that. Crap, now that I finally thought of more stuff to acknowledge, I'm running out of space. Okay maybe I'll reduce the font size a bit, hopefully no one will notice.

# Table of Contents

## Taming Riki Chapters

A Blondie's Tears	1
Breaking Raoul	30
Jupiter's Gift	57
After His Breakfast Spanking	84
Punishing Katze	122
Iason's Penthouse	153
A Taste of Freedom	188
Sir Riki	249
Deviance and Depravities	283
Secrets and Lies	310
A Simple Misunderstanding	345
Belonging	374
Jupiter's Blondies	423
Iason's Decision	468
Riki's Chance	503

<b>A Guide to Taming Riki</b> with Art by Ulla Nissinen	541
and Map by Harial	567

## Color Illustrations by Tata

At the Taming Tower	3
A Blondie's Tears	15
Katze's Punishment	149
Enyu in His Interval	211
Reunited	369
Yousi's Logs	445
Spanked in Front of Ima	465
Commander Voshka Khosi	481

## Appendix

Omaki's Letter to Iason	580
Omaki's Summons from Jupiter	580
Riki's Credit Portfolio	581
Yousi's Letter to Omaki	581

## A Blondie's Tears

RIKI STARED UP AT RAOUL IN HORROR. He instinctively tried to climb to his feet, but found, to his dismay, that he was restrained—his hands bound together and secured above his head and his legs spread wide, manacled to some hidden restriction. He was completely naked, lying on a cold metal platform.

“Iason!” he cried, panicked, desperately struggling against his restraints despite the obvious futility of his efforts.

Lord Am laughed, his voice deep and menacing. “He can’t hear you. And where you are, no one cares if you scream.”

The mongrel gaped at his Blondie captor, who wore only a pair of membrane-thin silk trousers, his long hair flowing in waves over the impressive musculature of his upper body. Sculpted arms, crossed on his bare chest, bulged with formidable strength Riki remembered all too well. His face was bloodstained, along with some of his hair, and his left cheek was bruised.

Riki tried to clear his mind, but his head was throbbing horribly. He had been at the penthouse. He had been chained, smarting from Iason's taming. Suddenly Raoul had appeared, and then....

His heart pounded as he remembered that Daryl had been knocked unconscious after being hurled against a wall.

*Where's Daryl? Where am I?* Riki looked around the unfamiliar room, searching for anything that might tell him where he was. The room was dimly lit, mostly by a reddish neon light that blinked in from a low, round window. Or perhaps the walls were red...yes, the wallpaper looked almost like crushed velvet, the color of blood. There was a long, low table—and on it....

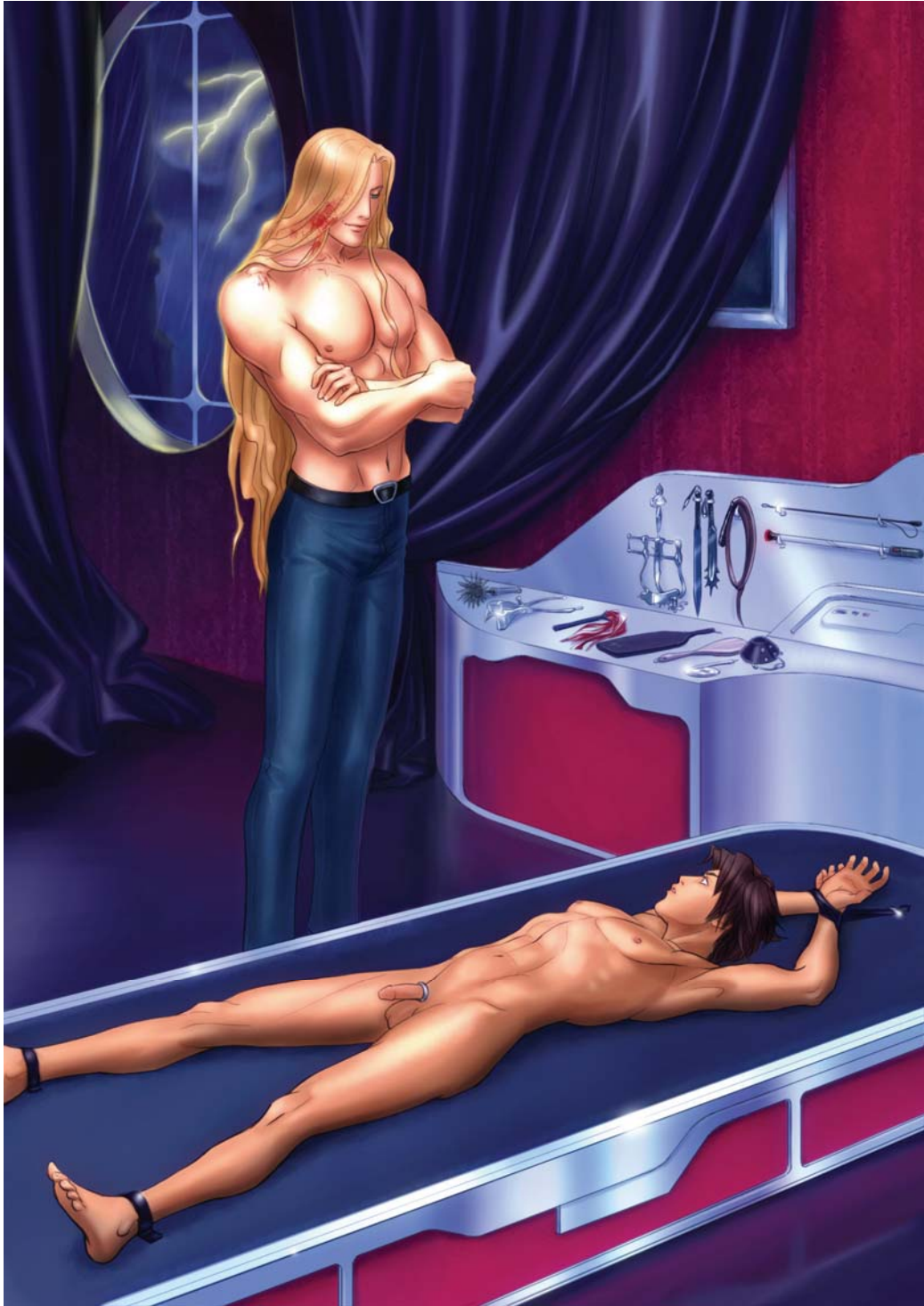
Riki shuddered.

On it were all manner of punishment devices, lined up neatly as if on display. Somewhere, not too far away, he heard screaming.

Lord Am leaned forward, smiling. "You're in the Taming Tower."

Riki heard these words with despair, knowing all too well what went on at the Taming Tower, the privately-owned suites run by the infamous Omaki Ghan. It was a palace of punishment: a magnificent, posh hotel where Elites brought their pets to be tamed into total submission. Since most pets—with the occasional deviant exception—were typically docile, the Tower was designed more to satisfy the sadistic fetishes of the Elites than to curb the disobedience of their pets.

It was no secret that many Elites—Blondies, especially—enjoyed disciplining pets for no reason other than their own amusement, and Omaki Ghan catered especially to them, offering every sort of device and assistive technology available to appeal to the dark tastes of Tanagurian Blondies. Pets slated for termination were typically brought to the Tower and whipped to death by their Masters.



﴿ At the Taming Tower ﴾

Art by Tata



Lord Ghan also handled pet relocation—the placement of older pets into brothels or open clubs. Finally, he disposed of those pets deliberately or accidentally killed during punishment.

Iason had threatened often enough to cart Riki off to the Tower for some serious punishment yet had never followed through with his threat, always resolving any issue of disobedience with a thorough discipline session at home.

“Iason is going to kill you,” Riki warned with a confidence he was far from feeling. Where *was* Iason?

Raoul answered this with a smile. “Iason will never find you here. You’re in for an eternity of pain and torture, mongrel, and anything else I want before I decide to kill you.”

Riki said nothing, his expression betraying no emotion. While he struggled to control his rising fear, he felt, more than anything, puzzled. Why did Raoul believe Iason would not find him? Could it be that he didn’t know about the pet ring tracer? But he was a Blondie, so of course he knew. Then why....?

Smirking, Lord Am reached down and touched his pet ring, but the Blondie’s unauthorized signature had no activation power, and Riki showed no independent sign of arousal.

“Let me guess. You’re expecting your ring to save you. Any minute, Iason will come bursting in here to rescue you. Am I right?” He laughed again—a harsh, barbaric sound that sent shivers down the mongrel’s back.

Riki made no reply, staring back icily at him.

Raoul held up a small device: a spherical gadget with metal rings that gyrated noiselessly around its core.

“This is an Interceptor. An import from Xeron—unauthorized, of course. It blocks tracer signals within a 200-hecatron radius, which means Iason will never be able to find you.”

Lord Am had made the acquisition the previous day when he had initially plotted to abduct and kill Riki after Iason’s remarkable declaration. Eventually he had abandoned his fell design, coming to his senses once his anger had diminished. After considering Iason’s history of vacillations and mixed signals throughout the tumultuous course of their relationship, Raoul had decided to approach him one



more time to talk things over. Surely Iason had been deliberately trying to bait him with his outrageous claim of being in love with the mongrel. Although he had never known Iason to play games, what other explanation could there be? At the very least, he owed him a visit just to caution him about the imprudence of making such a statement. Jupiter would not approve of it, even if it wasn't true—of that much he was certain.

The debasement of his painting had changed everything. Raoul knew immediately that Riki had done it, and at that moment he lost all perspective, his rage propelling him to resume his dark ambition.

Now, as he gazed at the mongrel bound so vulnerably on the platform before him, a sadistic smile curled the corners of his mouth. "No, he'll never find you. Which means for the rest of your short, worthless life, you'll be begging me for mercy—not that I intend to give it."

Despairing, Riki swallowed hard. In that moment, he came to a decision. He would incite Raoul into killing him rather than endure his agenda of torture. "Fuck you," he spat.

Raoul answered this with a hard backhand to his face.

"Keep your filthy mouth shut," he snarled. "You'll speak only when I tell you to."

"I'll speak whenever the fuck I want, you perverted, cum-sucking Blondie bastard!"

Another hard strike to his face. Riki tasted blood in his mouth, but this didn't silence him. It was better to go quickly. "Even if you kill me, it's not going to change the fact that Iason didn't want you. How does that make you feel, you big ugly dick, knowing he prefers his mongrel pet to you?"

Surprisingly, Lord Am only laughed. "If you're deliberately provoking me in hopes of cutting your misery short, you've failed. I have no intention of rushing the agenda, so you might as well accept the fact that your last moments of life will be pure hell."

"He'll kill you," Riki hissed, his black eyes glimmering. "He'll tear you to pieces when he finds out what you did to me. He'd kill you just for *touching* me and bringing me here—and for everything else you do from here on, he'll make you suffer in ways you can't imagine."

“Shut your mouth, you filthy slum rat!” Raoul struck him again, hard, giving him a bloody lip. He knew Riki was right; Iason would not tolerate what he had done. By taking Iason’s pet, Raoul had thrown everything away: his reputation, his career and most likely his life. He would be forced to flee Amoi or else betray Iason to Jupiter to escape the Blondie’s vengeance.

But he wasn’t going to dwell on any of that now. He’d already abducted Riki. He couldn’t change that. So, given what it would cost him, Raoul was determined to enjoy the hours ahead. For all his threats, he knew he didn’t have much time; he felt certain Omaki would notify Iason of his whereabouts eventually, although Raoul had threatened to beat him within an inch of his life if he breathed a word.

He uncuffed one of Riki’s ankles, fingers biting into the mongrel’s skin like a vise when Riki tried to use the opportunity to kick him. Restraining him easily with his formidable grip, he released the other ankle, and then, smiling slightly, he flipped the frightened pet onto his stomach. Riki’s wrists were bound with flexible Icarian signature-assisted cording, which allowed some movement when he touched it, just enough to flip Riki over without allowing him to escape.

With deliberate roughness, he cuffed Riki’s ankles again, enjoying the sight of the unhappy pet bound and spread wide on the platform, vulnerable to whatever devious agenda Raoul had in mind.

“This must be Iason’s handiwork,” he remarked. He brushed his fingers gently along the mongrel’s punished bottom before suddenly striking him as hard as he could, eliciting a deliciously anguished scream from his captive.

“Fuck!” Riki once again tugged futilely against his restraints.

“Ohhh,” Raoul laughed brokenly. “I’m really going to enjoy this.”

He walked over to the table to select his first instrument of pain. Privately, he wondered how Iason could claim to love the mongrel and then leave such angry bruises on him, although Lord Am had no doubt that Riki deserved it. For the first time it occurred to him that, given that Riki had been chained next to the defaced painting and that he had obviously endured a very recent brutal taming, Iason had probably punished him for vandalizing the painting. A faint, more rational voice from deep within urged him to contact Iason

and offer to return Riki to him while he still had a chance of the Blondie's forgiveness.

Then, Iason's confession of his love for Riki pressed into his mind, the pain tormenting him anew and reaffirming the necessity of what he had in mind for the mongrel.

Picking up a long, thick paddle, he turned and held it up to Riki, who watched his selection with trepidation. "Remember this? An excellent choice, wouldn't you say? I seem to remember you especially enjoyed being paddled."

Lord Am walked slowly toward the mongrel, paddle in hand, the fearsome look on his face terrifying to the manacled and bound pet.

Riki now realized Iason was not going to save him. Without the tracer's signature, the Blondie had no way to locate him. While his analytical mind spoke these facts to him coldly, his heart told him something altogether different—that somehow, Iason *would* find him. He would find a way.

Closing his eyes, he tried to link his mind to Iason's, sending him an image of where he was. He knew he didn't need to plead for help; if Iason knew where he was, he would come.

Despite his fear, he was determined not to give Raoul the satisfaction of his tears, and so he steeled himself for what he knew would be nearly unbearable pain.

His prediction was not in error. With savage force, Raoul brought the paddle down on Riki's newly tamed bottom, giving the mongrel his first real taste of hardcore punishment. He screamed—or someone near him did; he was too disoriented from the pain to make the distinction.

"Yes," Raoul whispered, delighted with the mongrel's reaction and agonized scream. "Go ahead and scream. I like the sound of it."

He paused for a moment, resting the paddle gently against Riki's buttocks tantalizingly, his hands starting to tremble. Then, with lightning speed, he whipped his arm back and brought the paddle down with another excruciating blow.

*WHACK!*

Riki screamed again, his eyes rolling back. "Iason!" He cried out instinctively, his Bison pride completely evaporated.

"Iason is not going to save you." The words were uttered coldly, darkly, as Lord Am once again rested the paddle on the mongrel's flesh in preparation for the next strike. "But keep begging, I'm finding it rather arousing."

"Why are you doing this?"

"Because you're filth."

*WHACK!*

Riki screamed, this time his cries ending in anguished sobs, despite all his intentions not to let Raoul see him cry. The pain was beyond comprehension.

"Please, Raoul!"

"That's it. Beg, little mongrel! Beg!" the Blondie taunted. "But you'll address me as *Master* Raoul."

*You're NOT my Master*, Riki thought angrily. His thoughts now shifted to Iason who, he suddenly realized, he would never see again. He had never really told Iason the secret he kept in his heart: that he loved him—and that, despite his continuous rebellions against his authority, he had finally come to feel resigned, even proud, of his status as the Blondie's special pet.

Lord Am smiled at his silence and then, when he struck him again, at his agonized scream and tear-choked pleas. Punishing Riki was immensely arousing, no question.

As he rested the paddle threateningly on his bottom between strikes, he fondled himself, his engorged cock easily accessible in his loose, silken trousers. When the mongrel began begging him to stop, his need for coitus became too urgent to ignore. He set the paddle down on the table, tugging his trousers down to his thighs, and then climbed onto the platform and mounted him, penetrating without preparation or comment.

Plunging into his tight depths savagely, he relished the mongrel's cries as he tore through unwilling flesh, the blood from his pillage soon providing lubrication to enhance his pleasure. It was a brutally delightful fuck, and Raoul loved every minute of it. Beneath him, Riki endured the rape through clenched teeth, glad for a reprieve from the paddling, but not enjoying his depredation in the least. He wished with every fiber of his being for Raoul's death. It was hard to

believe that he had actually enjoyed it the last time the Blondie had taken him.

“I’m going to fuck you all night, until you’re raw. Then I’ll rough you up inside and take you again, *after* I punish you first. I’ll fuck you until I’m tired of you and then castrate you before you die.” Lord Am whispered his dark promises into the mongrel’s ear, his deep voice strangely sensual, creating a disturbing incongruence between his erotic delivery and the eerie content of his speech.

Horried, Riki closed his eyes, trying desperately to remove himself from the hell he had awoken to as he prepared himself for torture and death. His thoughts drifted to the friends and lovers he had known throughout his lifetime, and of those he had loved most, one face dominated them all—the face of Iason Mink.



DECIDING ON THE RIGHT WHIP took Iason longer than he had anticipated. The selection of suitable implements at the pavilion was mind-boggling; Yousi had an entire wall devoted solely to whippage. Though Iason had never been particularly fond of whips, he had always harbored a special weakness for fine craftsmanship. He dallied, admiring the imported Icarian bone handles among some of the more luxurious models, most notably the engraved and bejeweled Emperor series.

The MXV Emperor, in particular, was intricately engraved with an ancient gripping-beast design, a motif indicative of the barbarian culture of Urasia—an intriguing replica, especially considering the fact that it had been imported from Xeron. The tiny eyes of the beast was inset with gems: rubies, sapphires, gamians and an intriguing, multi-colored gem he did not recognize.

The handle’s ornamentation reminded him of Riki. It was exactly the sort of thing his pet would have been drawn to—except in this case, he might have been less enthusiastic, given its functional use. Just thinking of the mongrel sent darker thoughts edging into his consciousness; the image of his pet lying curled up on the floor,

tear-stained face distorted with pain, filled him with sadness. His anger had now dissipated considerably, though he was still grieving the loss of a great work of art. He had been severe on his pet this time, and although Riki had most certainly deserved it, Iason found his suffering hard to bear.

Iason knew that he would have to be especially firm with him now that a new attendant was coming into his household. He wasn't looking forward to taming Riki all over again, but he knew it needed to be done—this time properly. Punishment and discipline were one thing, but having to break the mongrel's spirit, to force him finally into complete submission, was something else altogether. Yet, it was clear to him that radical steps were required to rein in Riki's disobedience. His own reputation was at stake. He shuddered to think how Raoul would react when he discovered what had happened to his painting and wondered how long he could keep the Blondie from finding out.

Though less disheartened about the necessity of punishing Katze and Daryl, Iason had no real desire to carry out the evening's agenda. While he might admittedly enjoy disciplining Katze—*some*—he doubted he would get much satisfaction punishing either of them as severely as he knew he must. It was simply what must be done...what any other Blondie would do. Both had earned the whipping in store for them. But Iason was not administering the punishment out of revenge, or even—at this point—anger. He was simply fulfilling his responsibilities as an Elite, doing exactly what Jupiter would insist he do.

All the same, he wished the evening would not come. Had such punishment been his to administer years before, he would not have given it a moment's thought. He would not have dreaded the suffering of the eunuch lovers or felt pity for them, and the fact that he did so now disturbed him. But, regardless of the cognitive dissonance that plagued him, Daryl and Katze were to be punished; he needed to finalize his decision regarding the whip.

The MXV Emperor was truly a work of art, and only after admiring the handle for a considerable amount of time did he consider the punishing lash itself, noting that it was a full-sized

quarter-inch whip with emission technology. He searched the handle for the options with some confusion, not finding a display.

“Lord Mink, may I help you with that?” an attendant asked politely, having watched the Blondie quietly for some time.

“Where’s the panel?”

The attendant took the whip, pointed to the gripping-beast and then pressed down on its tongue. Immediately the entire face lifted and slid to the side, revealing the command panel.

“What does it do?” Iason asked.

“It has six emission options: Sting, G-wave, Stimulant, Buffer, Accelerator, and Opiate Release,” the attendant explained. “Sting, of course, releases an irritant into the flesh. G-wave elicits sexual arousal. Stimulant releases a potent hexagon-norepinephrine derivative to revive the unconscious. Buffer provides the usual protective retracting mechanism to reduce scarring, which is quite an innovation for the whip, although some scarring is still probable. Accelerator applies an opiate-free Accelerator with each lash to promote healing—also quite painful, incidentally. And Opiate Release provides variable options for administering pain relief.”

“What is the point of an opiate release during a whipping?”

“I believe, Lord Mink, that the Icarian government requires this option on all emission series whips because of pressure from the Pet Rights activists who control the Senate.”

The Blondie laughed softly. “What idiocy. Nothing is gained by including an option that no one will use. Politics are the same everywhere, it seems.”

The attendant appropriately made no reply to this, waiting to see whether the Blondie had any further questions.

Iason decided he wanted to try out the whip and so strode over to the target pole. Opting to test it without emissions, he closed the command panel and then stood for a moment, adjusting his grip with a few small tosses to accustom himself to the feel of the heavy handle. Taking a step back, he whipped his arm behind him and then, lightning fast, unleashed a strike to the target pole, eliciting a loud crack. Brow furrowed, he moved back and struck again, this time putting his back into it, twisting his body to add some force,

and was rewarded with an even louder *CRACK!* He struck the pole a few more times and then stopped. Unlike previous visits to Yousi's shop, the Blondie was not getting his usual thrill.

"Have you found something suitable, Lord Mink?"

"This will do."

The attendant bowed. "Lord Xuuju hopes you will accept it as a token of his admiration and respect."

Iason's lips curled into a slight smile. "And are you sure Yousi realizes this is a 400,000 credit whip?"

"He has said whatever you choose is yours—no charge. And anything else you might like."

The Blondie laughed softly, amused with the leverage he was getting from Yousi's guilt over the C-20 incident.

"I see you carry a taming stick," the attendant continued. "We have a very nice selection of belts with multiple sheaths."

"Not necessary." Iason knew he would not be carrying the whip with him in public. Even if he needed to, he would simply attach it to his belt by the detachable loop hanging from its base. It was time he returned home. He was deliberately procrastinating, and Katze would be arriving soon.

"Give my regards to Yousi," he remarked and with a slight smile, exited the shop.

As he rode up to the top floor of the Eos Tower, he examined the whip more closely, admiring the elaborately ornamented handle before he secured it to his belt. When he reached the penthouse, the door hummed open automatically at his approach, and he stepped inside, momentarily distracted by the way the whip felt against his leg and wondering if perhaps he should have accepted one of the sheathed belts Yousi's attendant had offered, after all.

Then he stopped cold.

Daryl lay on the floor, blood pooling around his face. For a moment, Iason could not even react. He felt as though time itself had stopped. His gaze shifted to the corner of the great hall where Riki had been chained to the punishment post. But his pet was gone.

"Riki!" he gasped, rushing toward the post. He examined its broken clasp with horror. No one but a Blondie—an extremely



strong one at that—could have ripped a neck chain from the post. Iason didn't know anyone who could do it, except perhaps Xanthus Kahn...or Raoul.

The defaced painting was facedown on the floor, and Riki's urinal had been knocked over, its golden contents swirling with the blood that was splattered everywhere.

Panicked, he rushed back to Daryl, falling to his knees to examine him and then shaking him desperately.

"Daryl! *Daryl!*" Almost angrily, he forced the injured boy awake.

The eunuch moaned, his eyes fluttering open.

"Where's Riki?" Iason demanded.

Slowly regaining some sense of where he was and what had happened, Daryl parted his blood-stained lips and mouthed a single word before losing consciousness again. "Raoul."

Frowning, Iason leapt to his feet and rushed to the communication center to pull up Riki's tracer coordinates. His heart beating like a war drum, he stared at the displayed message in horror:

*Error 29/b/16789004 — Z107M. Receiver Not Found.*

Iason blinked in disbelief. Not found? How was that possible?

He stood as if frozen for a moment. Then he moved toward his chair but suddenly felt as if his legs were no longer beneath him. He gripped a table for support, trembling.

Where was Riki? What was happening to him?

His beloved, most precious pet was in the hands of a Blondie who bore him no good will. Riki was in absolute peril, and there was nothing Iason could do to help him. Why had his tracer pattern disappeared? How had Raoul managed to evade the tracing system?

"Riki," he whispered, suddenly overcome with emotion. With shaking fingers, he brushed a hot wetness from his eyes—the impossible, indescribably sad tears of a Blondie.

The door chime startled him. He rushed to the foyer, the entry door humming open at his approach.

It was Katze. He had come for his punishment, his thoughts, up to that point, bent solely around what was in store for Daryl and himself. He hardly knew how to react to the sight of the Blondie, rather than Daryl, answering the door. He'd never seen Iason in



© A Blondie's Tears ©  
Art by Tata



such a state before: his face was deathly pale, his eyes wide with unmistakable fear, his lips parted and his breathing labored.

"What is it?" he whispered, concerned.

"Riki's gone. Raoul's taken him."

The eunuch frowned as he tried to digest this terse but alarming bit of information. "Taken him? You mean you don't know where he is? But the tracer—"

"He's off the grid. His signature has disappeared."

As the severity of the situation began to sink in, Katze was seized with a horrible thought.

"And...Daryl?"

Iason, who was lost in thought, now seemed to remember the fallen youth, turning to look at him and moving just enough for Katze to see him lying on the penthouse floor.

"Daryl!"

Katze pushed past him and dashed to his lover's side. He knelt down, panic-stricken upon seeing him lying motionless in a pool of blood. "Oh fuck. Daryl! *Daryl!*" He desperately tried to rouse him and then looked to Iason. "Did you call a medical team?"

"No."

"What?! You just left him like this? Dammit, Iason! Fucking get him some help!"

The Blondie did not respond but simply stood, staring at a trail of blood he had just noticed on the floor, drops splattered from the door to the corner of the great hall where Riki had been chained to his post.

"Bloody fucking hell!" Katze fumbled in his jacket pocket for his handheld, flipping it open with trembling fingers. "Tanagura Medical. Emergency," he ordered. Upon reaching a connection, he had a team immediately dispatched to Iason's apartment.

Staring down at Daryl's almost lifeless body, Katze was overcome with emotion—fear, grief and overwhelming love. Cradling his lover's head in his lap, he began rocking, tears flooding down his face as he prayed to Astrajia and begged for Her help.

Iason had no one to appeal to for his own peace of mind. He did not even know how to pray. He suffered without comfort in an inner

realm of dark torment, his mind beset with a thousand images of what was happening to Riki.

Horrific things. And there was nothing he could do. Nothing.

His mind raced as he calculated how far Raoul could have traveled—even if he had abducted Riki immediately after Iason had left for the pavilion, they could not have gotten far. But...which direction? How had Raoul managed to block the tracing signal? He wasn't even aware such a thing was possible. But then, Raoul always seemed to be a step ahead when it came to technology.

Sitting down heavily in his favorite chair, Iason stared vacantly before him at the corner of the great hall where blood pooled on the turquoise marble floor, suddenly realizing how defenseless his pet would have been against Raoul. Beyond the fact that Riki had been chained to the post in the hall, he was no match for a Blondie. Raoul was probably five times as strong as the mongrel. Daryl obviously couldn't have provided any significant protection, unless, of course, he had been armed. But Iason never imagined Riki would be in danger in his own home or that an assault would come from a Blondie. He had underestimated Raoul—the intensity of his passion, the extremes he would go to and how cruel he could truly be.

His head throbbed, the pain becoming excruciatingly intense. He had to do *something*. He had to appeal to Jupiter for assistance, even if there was nothing she could do. But he dreaded doing so, and he hesitated, knowing full well what the ramifications would be.

He knew Jupiter. She would be jealous. He had never asked for intervention before. She would know that he would ask for it only when something critical was at stake, for something very important to him. She might save Riki, if she could, but in the end she would send him away and forbid his speaking of the mongrel ever again.

The only devotion Jupiter tolerated was to herself.

But what else could he do? Without Jupiter's help, Riki was doomed. He knew what Raoul could be like when angry, and given Raoul's hatred and jealousy for the mongrel, there was no telling what hell he would put him through.

The pain in his head was overwhelming. Iason brought his hands to his temples, swallowing back a wave of nausea and a bitter heat

that pushed up his throat. Suddenly, he saw a bright, pristine light before him, obscuring his vision. As it faded, he saw Riki. Restrained. And then Raoul, standing next to him. The Blondie was laughing, taunting him. The image shifted, becoming less distinct. Then, he saw a tall building, the letters of its spinning neon marquee slowly coming into focus.

*The Taming Tower.*

In the next instant, the vision was gone.

Katze still knelt on the floor, desperately trying to rouse Daryl. "Come on, love. Wake up now, darling. I'm here."

Iason jumped up and rushed to his desk to retrieve his laser, frowning when he saw that the entire drawer where he kept his weapons and implements of discipline had been emptied out.

"Where's my laser? Katze! Are you armed?"

"No."

"Why not?"

Katze only shook his head, too upset to answer. Frustrated, Iason scowled, heading for the door.

"Where are you going?"

"To the Taming Tower."

For a brief moment, Katze turned his attention away from Daryl. "You'll wear yourself out, searching randomly for him. He could be anywhere. You should stay here and wait for Raoul to contact you."

"I'm going."

Perplexed, Katze said nothing, feeling pity for Iason, who he believed was so grief-stricken that he was no longer in his right mind. Why was he running off to the Taming Tower? What were the chances Riki would actually be *there*?

Still, Katze could understand why it would be difficult for him to just sit around and wait. He was *almost* able to forgive the Blondie for failing to tend to Daryl. Clearly Iason was entirely preoccupied with his pet's well-being, his love for Riki so great that everything else was simply of no importance to him. Katze felt the same way about Daryl.

"I'm staying here," he asserted, in case there was any question about it.

Iason barely acknowledged him, his gaze resting briefly on his face before he left the penthouse.

Katze continued to plead with his lover, tears making his voice tremble. "Daryl. Open your eyes, love. Please."

With a groan, the boy finally stirred.

Excited, Katze leaned close to him. "That's it. Wake up, Daryl."

Daryl opened his eyes, squinting up at him. "Katze?"

"Yes! Yes, sweetheart. I'm here." Overjoyed, Katze began pressing kisses all over his face.

Daryl frowned. "What...happened?"

"Don't you know?"

The grey-eyed youth felt momentarily disoriented as he struggled to remember. "Riki! He took Riki!" he cried, trying to sit up.

"Don't move! Iason knows; he went to get him. He'll find him." Katze was not at all sure the Blondie would be able to find his pet without the tracer, but he didn't want Daryl to worry about it.

"Raoul...threw me."

"That fucking bastard! I'll bloody kill him!"

"My chest hurts."

"That's why you can't move. Help is coming. They should be here soon, I promise. Don't close your eyes. Stay awake, love."

The eunuch ignored him, his eyes fluttering closed.

"Daryl!" Katze shook him, feeling a rising sense of desperation.

"Katze." The boy opened his eyes again, his brow furrowed with pain. "I want to tell you...you made me happy. For the first time in my life."

"Oh, Daryl. Hang on, love."

"I love you...with all my heart."

"Don't you dare start saying goodbyes! Do you hear me? Do you want me to turn you over my knee?"

At this, Daryl smiled weakly.

"I will! I'll spank you so hard you'll...you'll cry like a baby."

"Tanagura Emergency!"

The door to the penthouse hummed open for the medical team.

"You. Out of the way," one of the medics ordered, pushing Katze roughly aside.

"He was thrown against the wall," Katze said anxiously. "He said his chest hurts."

"He needs to go to the hospital immediately," the medic replied.

"Katze," Daryl murmured. "Don't leave me."

"I'm right here. I'm going with you. Don't worry about a thing, love. I'll be with you."

"Actually, we'll need authorization from Lord Mink for you to accompany us," one of the technicians remarked.

"I'm going with you. You want authorization? How about my fist up your ass?"

"Calm down. We're only following proper procedure."

"Lord Mink is involved in an emergency at the moment, or has it escaped you that something is amiss here?" Katze waved frantically at the blood on the floor. "And if he finds out I *didn't* accompany his attendant, he'll have the lot of you dismissed by morning, mark my words! And I'll kick all your asses, on top of it!"

Daryl giggled weakly at this, despite his pain. It was just like Katze to start doling out threats.

"All right," one medic conceded, after studying Katze for a moment and deciding that it wasn't worth the trouble of angering the distraught eunuch. "You can accompany us, but we'll expect that authorization from Lord Mink as soon as he is available, or *you'll* be in a heap of trouble, mark *my* words."

"You'll have it," Katze assured him, reaching out to hold Daryl's hand as the medics lifted him onto a stretcher and carried him from the penthouse.

"Katze," Daryl whispered, grateful for his presence. He'd never been to a hospital before, and he was frightened.

Katze squeezed his hand. "I'm right here. They'll take good care of you. Everything will work out. You'll be fine. You'll see." His reassurances were exactly what his lover needed to hear, but in his heart, Katze was not at all sure that everything *would* work out. He, too, was frightened.

One of the medic's communicators blared out an inquiry from Tanagura Medical. "Team Four, what is your status?"

"Code alpha red, priority one," the medic replied.



Katze shivered at these words, hoping that his lover had not heard them or comprehended that his injuries had just been classified as life-threatening. In that instant he realized what he had been fearing was a real possibility.

He could lose Daryl.



IASON HAD NEVER DRIVEN SO FAST in his life. He swerved in and out of traffic, narrowly avoiding several collisions, before finally switching to hover-mode and pulling up into restricted airspace to increase his speed without endangering others. The Tanagura Police promptly transmitted a request for confirmation of his identity. He entered his passcode, cursing when he made an error, his fingers shaking.

The Chief of Police flickered onto the monitor screen. "Iason Mink. May we assist you?"

"No."

"Your speed exceeds protocol." It was stated simply, as though an everyday occurrence, when in fact no one, in years, had violated hovercraft airspace laws. But...this was Iason Mink.

"Override Alpha-Seven-Seven-Delta-Nine."

"Yes, Sir. We'll relay your override to Midas." The screen went blank, but only for a moment.

Next Jupiter appeared.

"Why are you in restricted airspace?" she demanded.

"Just for a little amusement." Iason smiled, adopting a relaxed demeanor with experienced ease. Deception was one of his many gifts, and when it came to Jupiter, he had always been able to play her without difficulty. This time, however, he was pushing his limits. Had she been more perceptive, she would have noticed that his hands still trembled.

"You gave your code to override speed protocol."

"Does that displease you? I wanted to see what she can do. Just for sport. It's been ages since I've flown. I'll switch back to ground standard if you prefer." His heart was pounding hard in his chest.

What would he do if Jupiter ordered him to stop, summoning him instead to her chambers?

"You're heading into Midas. Do you have business there?"

"Just pleasure. Heiku thought a little recreation would help these headaches I've been having."

After a slight pause, Jupiter seemed to accept his explanation.

"You have been having these for some time now."

"Yes," he replied, trying to hide his impatience.

"I have something for you. A gift. I had been planning to send it to you, but since you'll be in Midas, I'll have you retrieve it now."

"I'm flattered," Iason replied, his voice low and seductive.

"Perhaps it will ameliorate your headaches."

At any other time, Iason would have been quite curious about a gift with the potential to lessen his headaches—which had, admittedly, become a rather serious nuisance—but at that moment he was not the least bit interested.

"You are too kind to me. And you have found my weakness; I adore surprises."

"Is that so?"

"Oh, yes," he lied.

In fact, Iason rather abhorred surprises of any kind, especially formal gifts, which he generally disliked accepting because he was shrewd enough to recognize the obligation attached to them.

Jupiter seemed pleased with this answer, however. Her blue-white energy hummed happily as she stared back with what appeared to be almost a smile.

"You may pick it up at the Dark Horse."

The screen went blank, and Iason shivered, wiping the sweat from his brow and hoping that Jupiter would leave him in peace for the rest of the night.

He had crossed into Midas. It didn't take long to locate the Taming Tower; it was the tallest building in the pleasure city, situated in the heart of Apatia in the E-Zone district. The black mirror-like panes that covered the cylindrical structure from top to bottom seemed to glitter in the moonlight, like a dark phallus. The rain had abated and the Tower had resumed its light projection up

into the sky, a rather celebratory display considering what sinister amusements went on inside the palace of pain.

Iason could almost *feel* that his pet was near and this emboldened him, his worry shifting to rage. He was so furious he could hardly see straight. His anger with Raoul went beyond anything he had ever felt before. The Blondie had taken his beloved pet—which by itself was a crime—and was no doubt tormenting Riki in dreadful, unspeakable ways. Iason knew one thing: he would make Raoul pay.



RIKI WAS AWARE THAT RAOUL HAD LEFT for a moment. He heard the sound of water and then a slight curse. Smiling, the mongrel guessed that Raoul was cleaning the wounds he and Daryl had inflicted on him. At least they had managed to offer him some resistance and perhaps a little pain. The image of the gentle eunuch biting on Raoul's ear suddenly amused him, providing him a little relief from the horror of his situation.

His smile soon faded as Raoul came back into view, his face and mane now clean, the hair around his temples damp.

"Shall we continue?" he taunted, with an ominous smile.

The Blondie wandered unhurriedly over to the table of terror, pondering his instrument choice with disconcerting casualness. "This might be amusing," he remarked, examining a whip with an air of affected boredom. "Though I suppose it doesn't much matter which one I choose next, since you'll eventually feel them all."

"You're a fucking asshole."

"I told you *not* to speak and to address me as Master Raoul!"

"How can I address you as Master Raoul if I'm not supposed to speak, you bloody retard?"

At these words, Lord Am strode forward and unleashed his fury onto his captive's backside with a full-sized whip, immediately drawing blood. Riki screamed in anguish, having never before experienced the searing pain of a full-sized whip.

"Who's the idiot now? What kind of imbecile provokes the hand that's about to whip him?"

Unable to articulate a response that actually included words, Riki simply wailed his frustration and agony as the Blondie burned new tracks of pain into his already severely punished flesh, adding to his misery a savage whipping that extended from his back down to his thighs. It was horrible, beyond even his wildest imaginings.

The pain was so intense, so unbelievably overwhelming, that he began to drift in and out of consciousness. He eventually became aware that the whipping had ceased. He felt light-headed and cold and wondered whether he would bleed to death. He hoped he would. He would embrace death now if it came—anything to remove him from the horror of his current reality.

Then he felt another excruciating, burning pain on his backside, and he screamed incessantly as the Blondie applied an entire can of Accelerator to his open wounds.

"Stings a little, doesn't it?" Raoul smiled, enjoying his misery. "But I can't have you bleeding to death now, when we have so much still ahead of us."

"I hope he fucking tortures you to death," the mongrel whispered through parched lips, his voice hoarse from screaming.

Raoul grabbed his hair, yanking his head back roughly to whisper in his ear. "We both know that's how *you're* going to die, don't we?"

Encouraged by the fact that the Blondie seemed to have abandoned his Address-Me-As-Master-Raoul mandate, Riki grew bolder, laughing defiantly.

"We'll see how much you're laughing after I'm done with you." Raoul released him and went to retrieve a new implement from the table. This time it was a branding wand.

He flipped the unit on, the tip of the wand growing red-hot as Riki watched. Lord Am's eyes shone with dark satisfaction; he relished the mongrel's uneasiness and loved the way Riki continued to strain against his manacles.

"I suppose you're wondering what I'm planning to do with this. Allow me to enlighten you. I'm going to brand you with my initials. After that," he laughed softly, "let's just say...it's a *surprise*."



AS SOON AS HE SET DOWN ON THE ROOFTOP of the Taming Tower, Iason got out of the hovercraft and rushed to the elevator that would take him to Omaki Ghan's private office. He stepped inside, punching in overrides for all other user requests, and increased the transport speed to maximum.

The moment he arrived on Omaki's level, he dashed into his office, relieved to find him there.

"I have an emergency situation. I need to know which room Raoul Am is in."

"Iason Mink," Omaki greeted, with a slight bow. "What an honor."

"Now, Omaki!"

The Blondie raised an eyebrow at Iason's emotional state, answering without even checking his terminal.

"Floor 89, Suite Z542."

"I need access. Disable the locks."

"I can't do that, Iason," he answered softly. "Suppose you were to commit...a *crime* of some sort. If it could be shown I assisted you, I'd lose everything. You know my record."

Iason grabbed hold of his shirt, pushing him close to the terminal screen. "Disable them *now*, or I'll kill you."

"That's it," the Blondie encouraged, smiling, as he typed in the wanted deactivation codes. "I can't be held accountable if you *force* me to disable them. Also, would you mind locking me in that closet, so it's clear I couldn't alert the police?"

Ignoring this as well as the amused look on Omaki's face, Iason left, making for Raoul's room.



R.A. THE INITIALS WERE NOW BURNED into the mongrel's flesh, on his lower back just above his left buttock. Riki had never been burned

before. He was learning that pain came in many different forms, each one different from the others but just as excruciating in its own unique way.

Being branded as Raoul's also carried the sting of humiliation—he would die with the Blondie's initials stamped onto his flesh. He now despaired of Iason saving him, despite his earlier optimism that his Master would somehow find him.

Lord Am still held the hot branding wand in his hand. When he spread Riki's cheeks apart with his fingers and the mongrel realized what he had in mind, he broke down and pleaded.

"Please, Raoul, have mercy."

Surely, even Raoul could not be so diabolical.

"Call me *Master* Raoul," the Blondie replied in a low voice, "and I'll *think* about it."

Trying to choke down his pride, Riki opened his mouth to offer the wanted appellation. But he couldn't.

"Say it!"

The mongrel could feel the heat of the wand near his portal. But even if he called Raoul his Master, would the Blondie really abandon what he obviously had in mind? Riki didn't think so.

"You had your chance. Now you'll pay for your obstinacy."

At that moment, the door to the suite hummed open.

And there stood Iason Mink.

"Iason!" Riki could hardly believe his eyes.

Lord Am spun around to find, remarkably, that it was true. He stared at him incredulously, unable to conceive how he had possibly found them.

Iason walked toward Raoul in a menacing fashion, flipping his wrist to crack the whip he held in one hand. He said nothing, but his expression said it all.

The Blondie had never looked more formidable, his wrath etched unmistakably onto his features. His eyes were dark with rage and his breathing labored as he took in the scene before him, fuming. He glowered at Raoul, who was touching his pet in his most private regions—places forbidden to anyone but himself—and brandishing a hot iron frighteningly close to an area of critical importance to both

Master and pet. His gaze shifted to Riki, who stared back at him with indescribable relief.

Raoul swallowed, for the first time feeling truly apprehensive about what he had done. "You drove me to this. In your heart you know this."

"Drop the wand."

"Iason—"

"I said, *drop the wand*."

Instead, Raoul lunged forward, hoping to overcome him by brute strength. Furious, Iason unleashed the whip on him, knocking the wand from his hand and leaving bloody trails across his chest and arms as the Blondie instinctively raised his hands to shield off the savage whipping.

"He's only a mongrel!" Raoul protested. "You're overreacting!"

"He's *my* mongrel and *my* pet, and you had no right to touch him! How *dare* you, Raoul!"

The loud crack of the whip preceded Raoul's surprised and anguished cries, a symphony of punishment that made the weak, tortured mongrel laugh softly, able to delight in his tormenter's suffering despite his own agonizing pain. Iason had deliberately set the whip emission option to Sting, which delivered a painful dose of burning irritant with every lash.

Lord Am cowered under his punishing arm. For the first time in his life, he felt truly frightened of his former lover. Iason's eyes glimmered with dark fury and his mouth was set in a hard, uncompromising line, his arm whipping back with unrelenting retribution. Desperate, Raoul finally lunged forward and managed to knock the whip from his hand, sending it spinning erratically across the room.

Iason answered this with a hard punch to his face and then pulled out his taming stick to continue gifting him with furious, unremitting blows.

Howling like a child, Raoul backed away, trying to escape the fury of the enraged Blondie.

"I'm going to beat you to death," Iason hissed.

"No!" Riki protested weakly. "Torture him first!"

But Iason was far too angry to honor his pet's wishes and continued to pummel Raoul with the taming stick. He didn't stop until the Blondie fell to his knees and slumped to the ground.

Turning, he rushed to Riki's side, gasping as he took in the extent of his injuries. His entire backside was covered with bruises and lash marks, his bottom dark and bleeding, his portal purple and violated. There was blood everywhere and burned into the mongrel's skin were the initials R.A.

"Riki," he managed to whisper, his voice thick with emotion, as he gently freed him of his restraints. Picking him up effortlessly, Iason pulled him close. Eyes closed, he relished holding his beloved pet in his arms again.

"I knew you'd come."

"Pet. If I hadn't gotten here in time...." Iason fell silent, his voice choked by a constriction of his throat.

"But you did. I knew you would."

"Look what he's done to you. And I can only imagine—"

"It's over now."

"Riki, Riki. I nearly went out of my mind. You are so precious to me. I can't stand the thought of anything happening to you."

"You...you're precious to me too," Riki whispered. He felt weak and sick, but Iason had come to save him, and for that the Blondie deserved the truth. It was not exactly a complete declaration of love, but it was as close to it as the mongrel had ever come.

Hearing these words of affection, spoken so sweetly from the pet who lay so limply in his arms, Iason once again experienced the inexplicable sting that presaged a wetness in his eyes.

A Blondie's tears.



## 2

# Breaking Raoul

SOMEONE WAS GROANING—LOUDLY. Raoul's eyes fluttered open and he stared in confusion at his own arm, his skin covered with bleeding lash marks. He gradually became aware that he was lying facedown and that his chest and arms burned from contact with the surface beneath him. His entire body ached and throbbed. And who was making that awful groaning?

With horror, Raoul then realized that the groans were his own. He was restrained; his arms were fastened above his head and his legs spread wide and manacled. From the light sensation of air on his bare flesh, he knew he was naked.

Someone had moved into his line of vision but stood so close to him that he could only make out the bottom half of his body. Even so, he immediately recognized from his graceful movements and silken, ivory-blond hair that it was Iason.

"Finally coming around? What a fuss. You've been whimpering like a child for nearly an hour." Not true exactly—his awakening had been punctuated with the erratic miserable groan—but Iason knew such an assertion would wound Raoul's pride.

"Iason," he whispered. "Forgive me."

"Why should I forgive you? If I had not found you when I did, you would have castrated my Riki and tortured him to death, from what he tells me."

Raoul did not try to deny this assertion, although in his heart he wasn't sure he would have actually carried out *all* the threats he had made. He had been leaning toward torturing Riki for a while—certainly ravishing him thoroughly—and then offering to return him

on the condition of immunity from retribution. But he doubted Iason would believe this now.

"I was consumed with jealousy when you said you loved him," he explained. "I had gone to see you, to talk with you. Then I saw the painting, and I just went out of my mind."

Riki, who had been watching this exchange from the sofa where the Blondie had situated him as comfortably as he could, listened to these words with surprise. Iason had told Raoul he *loved* him?

Iason remained silent, not wanting to concede that the destruction of Raoul's masterpiece would probably have driven any artist to rage. But Riki was *his* pet—not Raoul's—and he had dealt with him firmly and appropriately for that transgression. There was simply no excuse for what Raoul had done.

"I should kill you."

"If you do, it will mean your own destruction. You're not entirely above the law, Iason."

The Blondie, of course, knew this was true, but it was news to Riki that his Master could not do whatever he pleased to his tormenter.

"Iason," he called out, weakly.

The Blondie turned and immediately went to his pet, crouching down to regard him with concern. "What is it, love?" he whispered.

"Is that true, what he says? What would happen to you if you killed him?"

"That would be up to Jupiter."

"Don't kill him then. I don't want to lose you. Let's just do everything else we discussed."

"You...don't want to lose me," Iason repeated slowly, savoring his pet's words.

"No. I might get stuck with a Master even *worse* than you."

The Blondie smiled, relieved that his pet was feeling well enough to engage in his usual insulting banter. He rose to his feet and returned to Raoul, enjoying the sight of him restrained and exposed so humiliatingly.

He bent down close to his face so he could look in his old lover's eyes. "Lucky for you, Raoul, Riki is more magnanimous than you. I'll

spare your life at his request. But don't think it's out of love for you—he only cares about what happens to me.”

“I'm in your debt,” he whispered.

“Yes, you are. You will, from this day forward, defer to me on every issue, Raoul, and you will do my bidding, when I bid it. And so that you do not forget it, I am going to brand you in the same way you branded my pet—but with *my* initials. That will be just the beginning of your punishment.”

Iason moved to the table and retrieved the branding iron as Raoul contemplated his situation with horror.

“Don't do this,” he pleaded, as Iason turned on the unit and approached him, the tip glowing red-hot.

“Why should I show you any mercy? You gave none to Riki.”

“But he's...he's a *mongrel*.”

“Even so. I've already told you; he's *my* mongrel, but you stamped him as your own, isn't that so?”

“Iason, please. I'm begging you.”

Delighting in the sight of his former tormenter begging to be excused from his punishment, Riki giggled. His mirth infuriated Raoul, who struggled fruitlessly against his restraints.

“This is absurd! I'm a Blondie!”

“And now you're *my* Blondie,” Iason replied, applying the hot iron to his lower back, just above his buttocks in the precise place Raoul had branded Riki.

Out of pride, Raoul tried not to scream, clenching his teeth and uttering only a low moan. But as the branding continued, his vocalizations became louder and more anguished.

“Do you see now how you made my Riki suffer?” Iason hissed, finding that Raoul's cries only angered him because they suggested the extent of the pain his pet had gone through.

Unable to answer, Raoul squeezed his eyes shut, his whole body shaking as the branding was completed.

“There we are. Your flesh is now a testament to our agreement.”

“I agreed to nothing,” the Blondie growled.

“Our *agreement* is that you will defer to me, in all matters. And if you fail to do so,” Iason held up the Interceptor, “I will alert Jupiter

that you have an illegal import. You know what Jupiter does to those who defy her import technology laws. Now, Raoul, it's time for your punishment."

"For pity's sake. You already *have* punished me!"

"Not enough," Iason replied. He moved over to the table, examining the display of instruments with an affected air of indecision, smiling. "How did you ever decide where to begin? I really can't make up my mind."

"The paddle!" Riki suggested enthusiastically.

"Ah, yes." Iason picked up the paddle, noting its weight with anger. No wonder Riki's bottom was so blackened. He turned it over in his hands. "This is going to hurt, I think."

"I'm not a pet or a child to be paddled," Raoul snapped. "Whip me if you must. But I'm still a Blondie. I'm entitled to some respect."

"You're hardly in a position to be dictating how you'll be punished. If I think you need a good paddling, you'll get one. And as it happens, I do."

Iason walked slowly toward him, paddle in hand, smiling at Raoul's transparent alarm.

"Iason, please."

"What's this? You can give it, but you can't take it?"

"You wouldn't dare."

"Wouldn't I?" Iason stood before him and with an impressive flourish, spun the paddle around in the air. He caught it easily before bringing it down on Raoul's bare ass, a move that was celebrated by his mongrel pet with a delighted laugh.

*WHACK!*

Lord Am yelped, his eyes widening with surprise.

"It's not as fun on the receiving end, is it?" *WHACK!*

Alarmed by how much the paddle hurt, Raoul cried out again, instinctively struggling against his restraints.

*WHACK!*

"For Jupiter's sake, Iason! Have mercy!"

"Stop begging. Have you no pride?"

Iason's comment shamed him, and he offered no more pleas for leniency, though he could not help groaning with each strike.

Raoul's begging had put Riki into a sort of delirious state, and he giggled incessantly from the sofa, almost forgetting his own pain.

Strike after strike hit the Blondie's exposed skin, tormenting flesh that had rarely known punishment. When at last the paddling came to an end, his body was shaking, a sight that was new to Iason. He had endured Raoul's arm on several occasions—never with a paddle, however—and he was feeling a deep sense of vindication to see him so painfully humiliated, so thoroughly paddled, like a recalcitrant pet or an unruly child.

This was, indeed, a turning point in the strange, twisted relationship of Raoul Am and Iason Mink.

Iason had retrieved his whip and now approached him, snapping his wrist to produce an intimidating crack that Raoul would have appreciated, had it not been his own body that was to provide reception for its fury.

"Please, Iason. You wouldn't scar me?" Not begging. Just a horrified question from a subdued Blondie.

"I've set it to Accelerator, which should lessen any scarring," he answered, smiling, "although it will hurt more."

Before Raoul could really object to this, he felt the searing pain of the whip across his back, burning into his flesh. To someone known throughout Eos as the Master of pain and punishment and an expert with the whip, being forced to endure the other end of a whipping was yet another humiliation. For the first time, Lord Am understood the extent of the pain he delivered to disobedient pets. The pain was inconceivable, and as lash after lash tore into him, he began losing a sense of the present moment, his thoughts moving to other times and places, to childhood shames and adolescent dreams.



LORD AM LOST CONSCIOUSNESS and then drifted back into awareness. Eventually he realized that Iason had retreated to attend to Riki, giving him a much needed hiatus from his punishment. He was overcome with pain and mortification, his thoughts floating from

one to another, seemingly without logical progression. He found himself besieged with memories from his early days with Iason, from the time they first became lovers to that fateful day when Raoul had cheated on him with Ambassador Anori Khosi.

In his entire life, Raoul had only been disciplined on two other occasions: once in his childhood, and once, much later, in the Headmaster's chambers with Iason.

In the first instance, he had been punished for fondling himself in front of Megala Chi, another young Blondie, during his First Year at the Academy. Megala had asked him to do so in exchange for a box of krevlians, Raoul's favorite dessert. He had hardly known what he was doing and had found it perplexing and amusing when young Chi had asked that he reveal and touch his genitals.

"Why do you want me to do this?" he had asked, giggling.

"Because I...just do," Megala whispered. "Move your hand, though, I can't see anything."

"You told me to touch myself. Do you want me to touch it or not?"

"Can I touch it?"

"Ewww, no! How many krevlians did you bring?"

"Six. And they're *full* of creamy frosting."

"Mmmmm!"

"All right then," Megala had bargained, "if you won't let me touch you there, can I put my finger up your ass?"

"What! Of course not! What is wrong with you, Megala?"

Omaki had happened upon them then, there in the cloak room. "Hey. What are you two doing?" he demanded.

"Nothing! Go away, Omaki!" Raoul whispered.

"I'm telling, then."

"No, don't tell," Raoul begged, offering him one of his precious krevlians for his silence.

"I won't tell, as long as you give me *two* krevlians."

"That only leaves me four!"

"If I tell, you'll be whipped in front of the entire class."

"Dammit, Omi! You're a...a...contortionist!"

"I think you mean extortionist," Omaki replied, with a wide grin. "And thank you."

Heiku and Xian had discovered them next.

“What game is this?” Heiku asked, excited. “Can we play?”

“It’s not a game! No, you can’t play,” Raoul announced, trying to push them out of the cloak room.

“I’m telling the schoolmaster you’re showing your wee-wee,” Xian announced.

“Me too,” Heiku nodded. “Unless we can play.”

“You can play,” Megala encouraged. “All you have to do is show me *yours*. You can have a krevlian, if you do.” Megala held out the box of frosting-filled confections.

“What! If they each have one, and Omaki gets two, that only leaves *two* for me!”

“I want two if Omi gets two,” Heiku announced.

“Yeah.” Xian nodded. “Two for me, please.”

“You can’t have two, that leaves *zero* for me!” Raoul yelled.

In the next instance they were apprehended by the schoolmaster, who stood, hands on his hips, staring down at them.

“He’s showing his *weenus*,” Xian reported, pointing.

“Megala made me show it!” Raoul protested.

The schoolmaster had taken one look at the lot of them and then escorted them all to the front of the classroom where he thrashed them in front of the entire section. The experience had been so painful—on multiple levels—that Raoul had never again engaged in forbidden behaviors...at least until he had begun to court Iason.

Once he reached sexual maturity, he found it impossible to resist Iason’s charms. He pursued him relentlessly until at last he cornered him, one fateful day, alone in the planetarium after day session.

Amazingly, Raoul had managed to steal a kiss and then slip a hand down his trousers, finding an impressively engorged erection rewarding his efforts.

Iason had done the unthinkable; he had allowed—even encouraged—his advances, his mouth opening to accept his tongue, his own hand seeking Raoul’s ready organ as he fondled him with hurried, trembling fingers. Both of them were so aroused by their forbidden rendezvous that they reached orgasm rather abruptly, ejaculating clumsily onto one another’s clothes.

And, of course, there was the day he finally managed to take the young Mink. He had come upon him in the laboratory one afternoon—seeking him out, as usual. They began fondling one another and kissing as they had now done on numerous occasions, despite how severe their punishment would be if they were discovered. Raoul turned him around, placing his hands palms down on a table, and then slid his hands deftly down his body, quickly tugging down the pants of his uniform and spreading his legs with his knees before Iason could really respond.

The young Blondie resisted, trying to escape his design, but Raoul reached around to stroke him suggestively, whispering seductively into his ear that he would perform fellatio on him if Iason would admit him.

Raoul's hardened cock twitched between Iason's thighs as he began prodding him with gentle thrusts, spreading his firm cheeks and brushing up against his portal enticingly. He wanted so desperately to plunge into him that he moaned, hands rubbing anxiously down the Blondie's hips as he bumped more purposefully against the guarded entrance.

"This is forbidden," Iason whispered, voice shaking.

"Everything we've done together is forbidden. This is just the next step. If we're going to risk being together at all, why not make it really worth it? And it's not *technically* illegal. There's nothing prohibiting it in the General Code."

"It's proscribed by the Academy."

"So are wagers, but that never stopped anyone. And what about those holoflcs we watched at Omaki's bash last week? Those are not only forbidden by the Academy, they're completely illegal, and you know it. But I noticed *you* seemed rather interested in watching them—especially the one with the Elite and his pet."

Iason had flushed pink at this, embarrassed that his curiosity had been so obvious, though just the mere mention of the contraband films made his erection twitch and swell.

Raoul fondled him, feeling encouraged. "Ah yes. That arouses you, does it? You're so deliciously deviant. I have an idea—we ought to borrow that disc from Omaki and watch it again. I'll pleasure you



while you watch. You can pretend I'm your pet. Would you like that? I remember the part you liked, where the pet is penetrated for the first time over that dining room table and begs his Master to stop. You had quite a bulge in your pants when he started crying. Did you think I wouldn't notice? He got a hard ramming, didn't he? I'll suck you while you watch and drink you when we get to that part. I'd put my portfolio on it, that's when you'll release. Although personally, I preferred the part where his Master tied his hands behind his back and made him kneel and then ejaculated on his face."

"Ohhh," Iason moaned, closing his eyes. The thought was most definitely enticing. He had already contemplated approaching Omaki about the recording, which he now desperately wanted for his own collection, despite the fact that it had been banned on Amoi.

"I thought so. Come on now. Quit teasing me."

Uncertain, but tempted, Iason hesitated.

Raoul took advantage of the moment and penetrated uninvited, covering Iason's mouth with his hand to muffle his cries.

"Sweet Mother of Amoi," he breathed, thrusting fully into the tight, resisting embrace. "Oh, Iason. You're...magnificent."

Iason answered that with another anguished cry that Raoul was careful to stifle with his hand.

"I'm sorry, my love," he whispered. "I'll make it up to you, I promise. Try to be a little quieter."

Once Raoul had entered him, Iason realized there was no use resisting further. He had endured his conquest, although he felt a little bitter with Raoul for making his acquisition without unequivocal consent—a dynamic that would be repeated between the two Blondies time and again.

When Raoul sensed that he no longer resisted him, he removed his hand from his mouth and pulled back on his hips with both hands, thrusting with abandon.

"What are you doing?" he gasped, widening his stance to plunge more deeply and marveling over Iason's twitching embrace, which gripped and squeezed him erotically. "Ohhh...that feels so good."

"I don't know," Iason replied, closing his eyes. The experience was new for both of them and neither knew the secrets of Blondie

physiology. All they knew was that the forbidden things they did together brought them both pleasure.

“Keep doing that...that’s brilliant, squeezing me like that.”

“I’m not aware that I’m doing *anything*,” Iason protested. He was gasping with every movement, thoroughly enjoying being taken. He arched his back to invite deeper penetration, instinctively mastering the art of coital submission in a single moment.

“Ohhh, Iason. That’s it...bend over a little more. Yes! Exactly like that.” Raoul grunted with each thrust, plundering the young Mink as deeply and fully as he was able.

After Raoul had spent his seed that first time, he had honored his promise and explored Iason with his mouth and tongue, a project that the young Blondie eagerly welcomed. Iason watched him with glowing eyes, biting his lip and drawing in his breath anxiously until finally—hands buried in Raoul’s soft, golden hair—he ejaculated into his kneeling partner’s mouth. That day the young lovers realized they would not be able to easily stop what they had started together.

While they were certainly not the only ones who disobeyed Jupiter’s prohibition against Blondie coitus, at the time it felt as though they alone dared defy her, which only fueled their desire for one another further and made the forbidden encounters all the more salacious.

And then, one day, they had been discovered. Raoul was taking Iason in his room and the dormitory monitor, Elusius Puck, happened to pass by his door, demanding entry on hearing the suspicious sounds within.

That was the second time in his life Raoul was punished. He and Iason had been escorted to Headmaster Konami Sung’s chambers, where they had been given a sound tongue-lashing before Konami forced them to choose their punishment: a formal reprimand on their academic records, or corporal punishment. Raoul and Iason had both opted for physical discipline rather than have their transgression listed in the school record where Jupiter would have access.

“I shall be very hard on you,” the Headmaster had warned.

He made good his threat that afternoon, and for the next hour kept them in his chambers, where he punished them himself. First

he had turned them over his knees like schoolboys, one after the other, forcing them to bare their asses and endure the humiliation of being spanked so intimately by the Headmaster. He gave them each a hard, rather ridiculously drawn-out spanking with a stiff metal ruler while the other watched. The spankings went on and on seemingly forever, and Konami showed no mercy whatsoever, even after he drew blood.

Raoul had fully intended to impress his young lover with his stoic silence in the face of pain, fantasizing how Iason would admire his virility and strength, but all this had evaporated once the Headmaster turned him over his knee and began acquainting him with his ruler. He was mortified that Iason heard him yelp and cry out, and Iason felt similarly about Raoul, biting his lip in a futile attempt to avoid vocalizing his own anguish.

Both young Blondies were surprised when, after being rather thoroughly disciplined over the Headmaster's knee, Lord Sung explained that they had only taken half their punishment. After that he forced them to stand, side by side, with their palms on his desk and their pants still pulled humiliatingly down to their knees. He took his crop whip down from the wall and gave them a second thrashing neither would ever forget. He alternated strikes between the two Blondies and put the weight of his entire body behind his arm, feeling that nothing but the most unforgiving correction would persuade the young lovers to abandon their illicit union.

Konami saw the way they looked at one another and he worried for them; Iason, in particular, was a favorite at the school—brilliant, soft-spoken, charismatic and a natural leader. A great future was predicted for the young and handsome Mink. Konami was sure that upon graduation Jupiter would select Iason for a Syndicate apprenticeship, and he was relieved when the young Blondie chose to take physical punishment in lieu of reporting his transgression on his record.

Raoul, on the other hand, the Headmaster had never cared for, although it was difficult to say exactly why. Perhaps it was his mocking smile, his air of superiority, the way he challenged the professors in nearly every subject—or maybe because, infuriatingly,

the young Am was nearly always right. But there was no denying Raoul excelled in his studies (with the exception of Headmaster Konami's *own* course, *Advanced Studies of the General Code*). Raoul was also an undeniably gifted artist, and Jupiter, oddly enough, seemed to have a fascination for art of all kinds. Konami believed Am was slated for an apprenticeship as well.

Perhaps, if he were entirely honest with himself, the Headmaster disliked Raoul's pursuit of his favorite, Iason Mink, who—if truth be told—Konami looked upon as he might a son. Indeed, he found the very notion of Raoul sexually violating Iason to be highly offensive, and deep in his heart he had long wanted to give young Am a sound thrashing over his knee.

So, when he had the opportunity to act on some of his buried anger toward Raoul, he seized the chance and punished him with all his strength. And when Raoul made the fatal mistake of complaining that he was being disciplined too severely, Konami found his paddle and forced the Blondie to take ten additional strikes with it.

After their punishment session, Headmaster Konami was reassured to see that the two Blondies seemed to be avoiding each other. The afternoon in the Headmaster's chambers had cooled their passion for a time, not only because of the pain but because of the shame of their punishment. For several weeks the thwarted lovers found it extraordinarily embarrassing to even look at one another.

All that eventually changed as the memory of their discipline faded. Raoul began to pursue Iason once again, although he found his former lover more resistant to his advances, spurning him time and again.

Finally, Raoul had resorted to stalking, following Iason as he went on one of his daily walks by the campus lake. He came up behind him, startling him when he seized him and pressed his body against his back.

Iason, immediately recognizing Raoul's distinctive manner, had not been amused.

"Release me, Raoul," he snapped impatiently.

"No. I'm not letting you go until I've ravished you."

"I mean it."

"As do I."

With that, Raoul put a hand over his mouth, dragging him over to small stretch of grass shielded by a hedge, and then threw him roughly to the ground.

Iason laughed. "You wouldn't dare."

"Wouldn't I?" Raoul revealed his enormous erection to the gaping Blondie and then pounced on him, kissing him furiously. Iason found himself responding without even meaning to.

Within a matter of minutes Raoul had him pinned facedown on the soft grass, tugging urgently at his pants.

Oddly enough, the sight of the fading ruler and whip marks on Iason's buttocks only increased Raoul's arousal. Spreading him apart with both hands, he moaned at the sight of the pink, spiral-like portal, tantalizingly inviting entry. He bent down and tasted him tentatively, eliciting a sharp gasp from the prostrate Blondie.

"What are you doing?" Iason cried, alarmed, moving as if to escape him. Raoul easily restrained him by grabbing hold of his hips, taking advantage of his elevated hip position to spread him wider for deeper exploration.

"Don't you like it?" he whispered, excited.

Raoul tried again, this time sliding his tongue inside him. Iason struggled only initially. Almost immediately he moaned, eagerly wiggling back to solicit more stimulation.

After a few minutes of this Raoul stopped, pulling a miniature holo-projector from his pocket and placing it where Iason could see it. He turned it on.

Iason sucked in his breath, mesmerized. It was the forbidden film of the Elite and his pet.

"Yes," Raoul confirmed. "I got it especially for you. Did you think I'd forgotten? And you'll love this one. It has an added scene with the pet being forced to service *two* Elites at the same time while his Master watches. And afterwards he turns him over his knee and gives him a strapping for failing to swallow every last drop."

Iason's cock went rigid in an instant. He watched the film with unblinking eyes, in that moment deciding that he was in love with

Raoul Am. The clip was simply the most erotic thing he'd ever viewed in his life. While Iason was so occupied, Raoul repositioned himself and slid into him, groaning and shivering from the Blondie's vice-like grip.

"I've missed you," he whispered, nibbling Iason's ear.

Though Iason didn't reply, Raoul could tell he was responding to him—or perhaps to the forbidden film. He was breathing hard, clutching the grass beneath him as Raoul proceeded to give him a slow, hard fucking. Whether it was the contraband holoflic or Raoul's unhurried technique, Iason climaxed for the first time while being taken, his anxious gasps so erotic that Raoul ejaculated just from the auditory stimulation.

From that point on, Iason found himself unable to resist Raoul's advances...at least until Anori came along. Once he had discovered Raoul's infidelity with Anori and declared their relationship over, things had never been the same between the two Blondies. Raoul had been pursuing Iason unsuccessfully ever since.

I.M.

The initials were now burned into the Blondie's skin. And as Raoul lay there, writhing in misery, it occurred to him that Iason had only formalized what had been true for a long, long time. Raoul was a slave to Iason...and now both of them knew it.



RIKI SUMMONED HIS MASTER with a plea for some pain relief, and Iason decided he needed to finish tending to his wounds before continuing with Raoul, who was drifting in and out of consciousness anyway. He contacted Lord Ghan's Medical Services & Amenities to request opiates and first aid supplies.

"Would you like a medical team?" the receptionist asked in a bored, uninterested voice.

"No. Just send me pharmaceuticals and supplies."

"Additional punishment implements or sex devices?"

"Not at this time."

“In order to serve you best, we must first ascertain the nature of injuries requiring attention,” she droned. “Do you have bruising, welts or swelling?”

“Yes.”

“Broken skin, lash marks or open wounds?”

“Yes.”

“Burning or branding?”

“Yes.”

“Broken bones?”

“No.”

“Castration, amputation or de-ocularization?”

“No.”

“Complaints of unbearable pain?”

Here Iason smiled, certain that this humorous addition had been at the urging of Omaki Ghan. “Yes. Be sure you bring an Opiate-6.”

“Any injuries not reported here?”

“No.”

“Please be advised that should your pet expire, the Taming Tower can in no way be held accountable. We urge you to admit our medical team or seek treatment at Midas Medical if you believe your pet has sustained unintentional injuries. However, we would also like to offer you Lord Ghan’s Pet Relocation & Removal Service, which, as a valued customer, you may utilize at a discounted rate. This service comes with a complimentary all-night pass to the hotel brothel. Would this be of interest to you?”

“No, it would not—and for the record, I am *not* a customer.”

“I understand, Sir,” she answered flatly. “Please be assured that your visit to the Taming Tower is completely confidential. Your privacy and comfort are very important to us. If there is anything—”

“For the love of Jupiter! Can’t you speed up this transaction?” Iason snapped impatiently.

“Of course, Sir. Your wish is our command. We would like to inform you, in case you were not aware of it, that Lord Ghan’s Brothel has been in business for over ten years and that the leading Blondies prefer it to the Dark Horse. As a valued customer you are invited to—”

“Did you not hear me?” Iason demanded. “Enough! Tell Omaki I am not amused!”

“Yes, Sir. We are almost finished.”

“I should hope so,” he replied irritably.

“Would you care for any imports, such as smokes, literature, oils or wine?”

“Smokes,” Riki managed to whisper, instinctively perking up at the mention of cigarettes.

“Dark Bacalias...and a bottle of White Moon.”

“Anything else, Sir?”

“No.”

“Your service comes to 10,500 credits. Please punch in your code and position yourself for retinal scan.”

Iason did so, after which the transmission unceremoniously cut off, with the Taming Tower graphic whirling on the screen and a confirmation message estimating time of order arrival in 4:58 minutes. He was about to move away from the terminal when Omaki Ghan suddenly flickered onto the screen.

“Good afternoon, Iason. Just wanted to be sure you didn’t require anything else—a body bag, perhaps?”

“Not at this time,” he answered wryly.

“Perhaps, then, I could interest you in an additional service: namely, the destruction of digital footage depicting your lovely evening here at the Taming Tower?”

Iason frowned. “What do you mean?”

Lord Ghan laughed softly. “Surely you didn’t think I would miss the opportunity of watching what went on behind closed doors at the Tower? As you know, I’m unapologetic about my penchant for punishment. Speaking of which, I’m simply beside myself here with what I’ve just witnessed. Sorry for the delay in contacting you, but I had to clean up first. I think I stained my favorite tunic.”

Iason sighed. “What do you want?”

“100,000 credits.”

“You can’t be serious.”

“75,000, then, since you’re an old friend.”

“Omaki! You’re...insufferable!”



"Thank you. 75,000, then?"

"How can I be assured you'll destroy the recording without making copies?"

"You don't trust people, and that's a sign of intelligence," Omaki answered, winking. "Everyone in Midas knows I have my faults. But of all people, *you* should know that my word can be trusted."

"Hmmm."

"Oh, come now. I'm hurt. After all we've been through together, honestly, I'm beginning to think you don't have a very high opinion of me." Omaki frowned, his expression serious, though his eyes twinkled mischievously. "50,000 and that's my final offer."

"For heaven's sake, Omaki. Must you always provoke me? Very well. 50,000 credits."

"Excellent decision. I know how embarrassing things can get when such footage turns up before the wrong eyes...Jupiter's, especially. I'll code your purchase as a line of customized disciplinary instruments and ship you a box of toys in a few days as a decoy—I'll be sure to put some goodies in there I think you'll especially enjoy."

"You won't be in business long if you make a habit of blackmailing your clients."

Omaki laughed. "Iason. You're quite amusing sometimes. What do you think my little empire here is really based on? Are you really so out of touch that you don't know what I do? My specialty is all that is forbidden. Have you any idea how many Blondies, ambassadors and consulate members have appetites for that? Or have you forgotten that you came to me for a taste of your first—"

"That's enough," Iason hissed. "Get on with it."

Chuckling softly, Omaki assumed a business-like demeanor. "Please punch in your code and position yourself for retinal—"

"You don't have to repeat all that again." Iason keyed in his code, and with a wink Omaki flickered off the screen, just as the door buzzed with the wanted medical supplies.

After retrieving these, Iason hurried over to Riki, who was now moaning with increasing urgency.

"I wanna go home," he whispered.

“What about Raoul? Don’t you—”

“I don’t care anymore. Take me home.”

Now that Iason knew they were being watched, he was a little relieved that Riki had lost his desire for disciplining Raoul. He was anxious to get home, as well. He gave Riki an Opiate-6 and then decided to call Yui, Raoul’s attendant.

Yui answered, looking surprised to see the Blondie on-screen.

“I am sorry, Lord Mink, but Master Raoul is not here at present.” In fact, Yui was a little concerned. It was late and Raoul still had not returned home.

“He’s here with me. We’re at the Taming Tower. Floor 89, Suite Z542. He’s going to require some first aid. Can you come for him?”

“Of course, Lord Mink.” Yui answered without hesitation, alarmed that his Master required first aid, although privately he wondered how well he would do on the Tanagura and Midas freeways. He knew how to drive, of course, but was rarely asked to do so, and never on the freeways.

“Put your vehicle on automatic and punch in M-A-EZ997OG/tt to pull up the screen for the Taming Tower,” Iason instructed, as if reading the anxious youth’s thoughts. “It will bring you here via the automated lane above the main freeway. I’ll enter clearance for you to leave Tanagura. Do not contact the police or a medical unit. Is that understood, Yui?”

“Yes, Sir.” Yui was even more worried after hearing these odd instructions, and wondered why his Master would need first aid. Although it went against his obedient nature, he began to feel a little angry at Lord Mink. What did the Blondie have to do with Raoul’s injuries, and why was he circumventing the medical system? Yui had training in first aid, but he wasn’t a medical technician. What if his Master needed professional treatment?

He left immediately in Raoul’s reserve vehicle, nervously punching in the instructions for an automation sequence to Midas.

After hanging up with Yui, Iason turned his attention to Riki, who was begging him for a smoke.

“You’re too weak to hold it up.”

“You can put it up to my lips, though. Please.”

Iason honored his pet's request, helping him enjoy one of his favorite pleasures even before he poured himself some wine, of which he was in desperate need. Then he began cleaning the blood from Riki's body and tending his wounds, a project that his pet found quite objectionable, repeatedly grabbing Iason's hand in a feeble attempt to stop his ministrations.

"Come now," Iason scolded. "Do you want an infection? Stop resisting me."

Riki pouted at this. "Can't we finish this at home?"

"I'm waiting for Yui to arrive. Then we'll go."

Lord Am, who had been lying as if asleep, now roused, seeming alarmed. "Yui is coming?"

"Yes, he's coming to tend you."

"Untie me—take off these manacles," Raoul pleaded. "Don't let him see me like this, Iason. You must know that I'll never have his respect if he sees me this way."

Iason knew this was true, and so he complied, releasing him from his restraints. Raoul was so weak that he simply remained lying on the platform.

After a few minutes, Yui arrived and took in the scene, his eyes moving back and forth between his Master and Riki. He looked at Iason with confusion, but the Blondie offered no explanation. He couldn't piece together what had gone on there, but he also knew it wasn't his place to ask. Walking quickly without seeming to rush to his Master's side, he knelt down on one knee.

"Can I bring you anything—a drink, perhaps, Master?" He spoke in a soothing voice that informed Raoul immediately he made no judgments about what he had seen there.

"Water, Yui."

As Yui went to retrieve the wanted potable, Iason pointed out the first aid supplies he was leaving. "You should have everything you need here. I'm taking the rest with me."

"Yes, Lord Mink." Yui bowed to show his respect, though in his heart he found it difficult to do so.

Nodding, Iason dumped the supplies he wanted in a container left by the medical unit, and then picked Riki up and carried him

from the room without another word to Raoul or Yui. He draped his cloak over his naked pet and took him to the rooftop where his hovercraft was parked.

“Hey,” Riki exclaimed, perking up a bit, “is this yours?”

“Don’t you recognize it?” Iason smiled.

“But...it’s a hovercraft too?”

“Yes, it’s a hover-hugger hybrid.”

“Awesome!”

The mongrel’s approbation of the vehicle’s hovering capabilities was thus established, much to Iason’s amusement.

Riki’s mood quickly soured, however, when the Blondie tried to situate him in the front, the pressure of the seat excruciating against his sore backside.

“Why can’t I lay down in the back on my stomach?” he wailed.

“Because there would be no way to properly restrain you. The last thing I need is for you to go flying through the windshield.”

“But what are the chances of that? You’re a good driver, right?”

“The issue is not open for debate, Riki,” Iason answered, firmly.

“Now, just try to relax. We’ll be home in a few minutes.”

“You’re mean,” Riki sulked.

“I’m only being firm because I care about you and don’t want to see you hurt.”

“I already *am* hurt,” the mongrel muttered.

“Hush.” Iason put the hovercraft in motion and was just about to take off when he suddenly cursed. This surprised Riki, who had never before heard him swear.

“What is it?”

“I’m sorry, Riki. We have to make a...quick stop, and after that I promise we’ll go straight home.”

“What!”

“It can’t be avoided. Jupiter’s orders.”

“Well, that’s just fucking great. I’m about ready to die over here and you’re running around doing that stupid-ass computer’s bidding. You Blondies really are something. Jupiter this, Jupiter that. You ought to unplug her, the wiry bitch. She can kiss my mongrel ass too.”

Iason almost laughed aloud at this but managed to keep his mirth to himself, feeling a strange mixture of shock and delight at his pet's fearless words.

"Riki," he scolded.

"What?" the mongrel protested. "I know you're thinking the same thing, probably. Anyway, where are we going?"

Iason sighed. "The Dark Horse. I have something to pick up."

"It better not take long," Riki mumbled, yawning.

The Dark Horse was located only a few blocks away. They approached it from above, the tower bathing their hovercraft in a neon purple light. On the rooftop a violet holographic stallion kicked dramatically, glowing brightly against the night sky.

Only as they lowered onto the roof did the same thought occur to Master and pet: the Dark Horse was a pet brothel. Why had Jupiter instructed Iason to go there?

Upon landing, Iason was immediately greeted by an attendant; only VIPs landed on the rooftop of the Dark Horse.

"Lord Mink," the attendant murmured, bowing deeply. "We have been expecting you. Lord Sami would like to invite you to his penthouse for a drink."

"I can't stay. I've come to pick up something that was left for me."

"Of course. Right away."

The attendant spoke into his handheld, asking for Jupiter's gift to be relayed to the rooftop. Within moments, the door to the brothel hummed open and several attendants appeared, leading a young male on a leash toward him.

Iason blinked. "Don't tell me it's a pet."

The boy looked directly at Iason with large, light green eyes. He was an intoxicatingly pretty pet, no question—with fine features and long blondish-red hair that was somewhat affectedly tousled and stylishly unkempt.

He looked pleased to see Iason, smiling demurely. "Master Iason," he greeted, bowing his head. "I am honored."

The Blondie nodded curtly, trying to hide his irritation, and looked to the attendant for an explanation.

"His name is Enyu. He came with this."

The attendant handed Iason a small card, which read *For Iason Mink. A small token of Jupiter's favor.*

Sighing, Iason took the leash from the handler, pulling the young pet a little roughly toward the hovercraft. He had no choice but to accept Jupiter's gift—to do otherwise would be inconceivable. But he knew the new pet would probably not sit well with Riki, who was accustomed to having his complete attention at the penthouse.

Already he was pondering what he was going to do. Perhaps he should keep the new pet in an Apatian condominium, away from Riki. But that would only cause jealousy when he went to visit Enyu. And if he *didn't* visit Enyu, Jupiter would be offended. No doubt it was exactly what Jupiter had in mind, to stir up rivalry and conflict between Riki and this new pet.

And Jupiter had claimed her gift would *help* his headaches. He shook his head, annoyed.

"In the back," he commanded, giving the pet a little push from behind. As Enyu gracefully boarded the vehicle, Iason noticed how pleasant he smelled—his hair, and some sort of faint, alluring scent.

Without exactly meaning to—or perhaps for only a moment—he allowed his hand to slide down and briefly touch the youth's firm bottom, feeling an unexpected surge of carnal desire.

He pulled his hand away as if burned. The last thing he needed was to become sexually infatuated with another pet.

As soon as he got into the vehicle, he could see that Riki was decidedly displeased.

"Who the fuck is this?" he demanded.

"Jupiter has given me this pet. His name is Enyu. I am counting on you, Riki, to show him the proper courtesy and welcome him to our home."

Riki and Enyu evaluated each other for a long moment. Enyu studied Riki with amazement. He had already been briefed about the infamous Riki the Dark, who it was rumored Lord Mink paired with and who was known for his flagrant disobedience.

From the looks of him, the mongrel must have just been punished: his face was covered with bruises and cuts, and he appeared to be naked but for a cloak partially wrapped around him.

Enyu wondered what Riki had done to require such violent correction and why Iason had chosen to bring the punished pet with him to the Dark Horse.

He also wondered what his Master would expect from him. Would he take him to his bed, the same way he took Riki? He certainly hoped so, and he would do everything he could to encourage the Blondie toward that end. At the very least, Master Iason would find that, unlike Riki, *he* was nothing but obedient.

Riki was fuming with jealousy. He looked back and forth between Enyu and his Master, furious when Iason refused to meet his gaze.

“You’re not seriously keeping him, are you?”

“I don’t have a choice,” Iason replied. Then with a slightly arched brow, he teased softly, “Don’t tell me you’re jealous?”

Riki snorted. “Of that piece of pet trash?” He turned and glared at Enyu.

The new pet simply smiled back, amused. He was thrilled to be joining the household of Lord Mink and did not mind Riki’s insults. He felt confident that he could win him over, eventually.

As for Riki, he was in an extremely foul mood. Enyu had ruined his intimate moment with Iason. He had been looking forward to returning to the penthouse, for he felt sure that some kiss-ass pampering was on the agenda. With this new pet in the picture, he didn’t know what to expect. And this “Enyu” was far too attractive.

Yes, Riki was most assuredly jealous of him. And...he was also...becoming...extraordinarily...*sleepy*.

Riki yawned, resting his head back on the chair. He felt the seat tip back as Iason adjusted it via the control panel to a more comfortable, reclining position.

“That’s it,” the Blondie encouraged gently. “Close your eyes and go to sleep.”

Enyu watched this exchange with wonderment. What Blondie talked to his pet in such a manner? Almost as if he *loved* him. Then...perhaps it *was* true what he had been told about Lord Mink and his pet.

The mongrel groaned, muttering a few unintelligible words, and then seemed to fall fast asleep.

Enyu looked up and realized Iason was watching him through the rear-view mirror. His heart missed a beat or two as he gazed into his sapphire-blue Blondie eyes, which appraised him with such intensity.

“Are you Amoian?” Iason asked, finally.

“No. I’m from Xeron.”

“I thought so.” Much to Enyu’s astonishment, Iason spoke this in the Xeronian common tongue.

“Where did you learn my language?” he asked, excited.

“I have a fondness for languages. They come easily to me.”

“But I’ve heard it’s quite difficult to learn—especially formal Xeronian, which you’re speaking.”

“I did not find it especially so.”

“How did you know I was from Xeron?”

“Because of your eyes, of course. Your pupils are elliptical.”

“Most people don’t notice so quickly.” Enyu smiled, intrigued with his Master’s perceptiveness, as well as his ability to speak his language—words he had not heard since leaving Xeron.

“I assume you were raised at Hiroshi’s palace. Does that mean you have no inbred controls?”

“Yes, I grew up in Prince Hiroshi’s palace. But you do not need to worry. I assure you, I will obey your every command, Master Iason.” He lowered his voice provocatively. “Your...*every* command.”

Iason’s lip twitched a little at this suggestive remark, and he found his heart beating a little faster. So, Jupiter had no problem with sending him a sex-pet from Xeron, but she resented his keeping Riki?

He puzzled over this, mystified. But then, it was no secret that Jupiter disliked mongrels. Perhaps this was her compromise: she would provide him with a toy of her choosing, but she would expect him to give up his Ceres-bred pet in return.

Iason knew that was never going to happen—he would never give up Riki. However, there was no reason he could not enjoy this new pet, especially if it would please Jupiter.

“Have you been shown?”

“Only at the palace, at a private show for visiting dignitaries.”

“And how came you to Amoi?”



"I was purchased on Xeron for the length of a voyage and sold here on arrival."

"I see." Iason paused before asking his next question. "And did your Master copulate with you?"

Enyu averted his eyes. "Forgive me, Master Iason, I do not mean to avoid a direct question, but I am compelled to keep in confidence any private matters regarding my former Master."

The Blondie nodded, pleased with this answer, and now curious as to the extent of the Xeronian's sexual experience.

"However," Enyu continued, his eyes meeting Iason's in the mirror, "I can tell you that, should you desire sexual gratification, Master, I would strive to please you however I could."

Iason instinctively adjusted himself, spreading his legs a little wider. "And what if it pleases me to watch you with Riki?"

Enyu collected his thoughts before answering. "I am ready to do your bidding, whatever it might be." Privately he hoped this bidding would be alone with the handsome Blondie, not with the dark-eyed mongrel who clearly had already taken a strong dislike to him.

Pleased with the young pet's seductive and fawning manner, Iason fell silent, looking away. He was thinking about Xeronians; from what he remembered, the males actually cycled, rutting on the new moon. He wondered how their cycle would react to the twin moons of Amoi.

He had always wanted to see a Xeronian in heat and had heard they were quite irresistible and insatiable, so much so that Xeronian males had to be chained up during the five-day rutting period. He began looking forward to having Enyu at the penthouse. Riki's jealousy might be amusing. Although he had deliberately avoided having Riki pair with other pets, he found the idea of watching him with Enyu intriguing, especially given the fact that Riki would obviously resist such a project. At the very least, the Blondie wouldn't be bored any time soon.



RAOUL HAD NEVER FELT SO HUMILIATED in his life. He lay on his stomach as Yui tended to him, mortified for the boy to see him so shamefully humbled, his body ripped with the unmistakable marks of discipline. But Yui's quiet manner was comforting, and the Blondie noticed how tenderly he dressed his wounds, seeking to cause him as little pain as possible.

Yui was impressed with his Master's unflinching stoicism, how he quietly endured what must have been excruciating pain from the look of his wounds, particularly the lash marks. He couldn't get his mind around what had happened between his Master, Iason and Riki, though he knew better than to ask.

One thing he was sure of—this was no lovers' game. His Master seemed beaten and defeated, his wounds deeper than those Yui nursed on his torn and bruised flesh. And the initials burned so savagely onto his skin could only belong to Iason Mink.

Yui felt angry at the powerful Blondie for his callous, brutal treatment of his Master, wishing he were in a position to do something about it, to take some sort of revenge. Such thoughts of vengeance were atypical for the gentle youth, who was generally peaceful by nature, but his feelings for Raoul were strong, and the grievance done to him, in his view, unconscionable.

Once all his wounds were tended, Raoul insisted that he apply an Accelerator. "Yui," he began and then fell silent. He was worried that he would lose his composure, that he would cry out in pain, which he did not want Yui to witness.

"I'm afraid it will be dreadfully painful, Master," Yui said quickly, perceiving the cause for his Master's sudden distress. "It's said that Commander Kattahar, after the midnight uprising on Arman, insisted his wounds be accelerated, but screamed so loudly Lieutenant Tung knocked over a lantern and set the tent on fire."

Smiling slightly at Yui's story and grateful for his diplomacy, Raoul steeled himself, and then nodded.

"Go ahead."

The pain was, in fact, so unbearable that the great Blondie screamed through clenched teeth, his eyes rolling back in agony. When Yui had almost finished, Raoul instinctively grabbed his arm,

forcing him to drop the Accelerator, and then pushed him violently to the ground.

Surprised, but not really hurt, Yui remained calm, understanding that Raoul had not acted against him, but against the pain.

Lord Am immediately regretted his actions, feeling exceedingly foolish. He held out a hand to Yui. "I didn't mean to hurt you," he offered, tersely.

Yui took his hand, smiling when the Blondie yanked him easily to his feet. "I wasn't hurt. Can I...get you anything, Master?"

"Mmm?" Raoul closed his eyes, sighing. The opiate Yui had given him was starting to kick in, and he was feeling sleepy.

Yui washed his face with a damp cloth and then brushed out his long, golden hair, stroking his temples in the soothing way a parent cajoles a child to sleep. As he moved to leave, Lord Am reached out and seized his hand.

"Stay," he commanded, comforted by the boy's presence and by his gentle touch. He couldn't bring himself to ask for what he wanted, but he hoped Yui would somehow discern it from his actions.

Yui's heart beat a little faster as his Master continued to hold his hand. He reached out with his other hand and continued caressing Raoul's brow, which was exactly what the Blondie wanted. He sighed, contented, and was finally lulled into a restful slumber.

## Jupiter's Gift

RIKI WOKE WITH A START. He started to cry out but was comforted by the feather-light caress of his Master's hair brushing against the side of his face and its exotic, intoxicating scent.

"Iason?" he whispered. The room was dark. Riki lay facedown, staring at the familiar vase in the corner of the room. So. He was home...and in Iason's room.

The Blondie leaned down and kissed him on the temple. "I'm here, love."

In fact, Iason had stayed with him from the moment he brought him home, carrying him from the hovercraft up to the penthouse and then positioning him gently on the bed. He had taken advantage of Riki's drugged state to finish tending his wounds so as to cause him less discomfort, silently cursing Raoul the entire time.

"Still in pain?" he asked, brushing back a few wayward strands of hair from the mongrel's face.

Riki groaned, enjoying Iason's attention. Although he was still sore, the combination of acceleration and opiates had worked its magic, and he was feeling surprisingly well, especially considering all he'd been through. But there was no way he was going to squander an opportunity for some pampering.

"Everything hurts," he complained. "And I'm starving, though I doubt I can even eat. It would be hard to even lift my hand."

The Blondie tried to suppress a smile but couldn't; his pet was simply too adorable when he was playing the injured puppy. "Then, we shall have to get you some dinner. I can feed you." He fell silent for a moment, realizing that with Daryl and Katze gone, there was

no one in the penthouse available to cook. “Is there anything in particular you’d like?”

Riki’s eyes lit up. “You know what sounds really good? Mutton stew. And a cherry pie for dessert.”

Iason rose. “I’ll take care of it. You rest.”

The mongrel nodded feebly, his eyes fluttering closed as though he were about to perish.

“Oh!” he exclaimed suddenly, lifting his head. “And frozen creams with the pie! Vanilla with caramel swirls!”

The Blondie nodded. It was encouraging that Riki’s appetite hadn’t suffered any, although he knew it was probably due to the effects of acceleration. “I’ll be a few minutes; I’m going to have it brought up from the pavilion.”

“Why don’t you just have Daryl...” Riki began and then paled, suddenly remembering what had happened the day before at the penthouse and that the eunuch had been thrown across the room by Raoul. “Daryl! He—”

“Daryl is at the hospital. Katze will call when he knows anything.”

“Is it that serious?” his pet cried, alarmed.

Iason pressed a finger to his lips. “Hush. You’re not to worry about it. He’s in good hands. And Katze is with him.”

“But Raoul knocked him out! I remember I saw blood, and—”

“Riki. Didn’t you hear what I just said? Daryl is at the best medical center in the Quadrant. I want you to *rest* and not worry about what is happening to him.”

“How can I not worry?” Riki protested. “He’s like, the only friend I have in all of Eos! Except Katze. Shit, Katze must be going out of his mind!”

“If it will make you feel better, I’ll call the hospital and ascertain his prognosis.”

Riki snickered at the Blondie’s peculiar phrasing, relaxing. “You’re funny, Iason. Do that. *Ascertain his prognosis* and then let me know what the fuck is going on.”

“Very well. You rest, and I’ll go retrieve your meal.”

Riki yawned and then suddenly sat up, frowning. “Hey. Where’s that stupid pet?”

Surprised, Iason looked up to see Enyu watching them from the great hall. He had completely forgotten about Jupiter's gift as soon as they had returned home.

Enyu had followed Iason uncertainly into the penthouse, watching the Blondie carry his pet into what was obviously the Master bedroom. He stood outside the bedroom, not wanting to intrude, but wondering why no one came to wait on him. The stench of urine soon drew his attention, and he stared in confusion at the disarray of the great hall, noting the urinal toppled over and the mess on the floor. Perhaps there had been a disturbance of some kind? But where were Iason's attendants? When the Blondie continued to ignore him, Enyu found an unobtrusive chair near a corner and sat down to wait.

Now, after several hours of being completely ignored, Enyu realized that his new Master had finally noticed him. He straightened up, hoping to be addressed and told what to do.

Iason turned back to Riki. "I should get him settled in. To be honest, I'd forgotten all about him, and he's probably been waiting for instruction for hours."

Pleased with Iason's apparent disinterest in the new pet, Riki nodded. "Come back soon," he urged. "And don't forget my food."

Iason strode into the great hall, frowning. Enyu rose, relieved that the Blondie was finally addressing him.

"You were not expected," Iason announced, after a moment, "and Daryl is not here to wait on you, so I'll bring you something to eat from the pavilion. What would you like?"

"Anything, Master," Enyu answered, bowing. "Please, do not go to any trouble."

"I will bring you the same thing Riki wants then. I'll show you to your room."

Turning on his heel, Iason headed toward the guest wing. He would have to put Enyu there, since the rooms in the main house were all taken. The guest suites had not been used since Ambassador Anori had stayed with him years before, but Iason had housekeeping maintain the rooms in case they were ever needed again. After Anori's visit, he had been quite reluctant to invite other

guests to his home, choosing instead to lodge dignitaries in the opulent hotels of downtown Tanagura or in the bayfront Denovian Royal Suites in Midas.

He entered the codes to access the guest wing, and the door hummed open, the eerie sound echoing down the long hall. With ten suites and two pools, the guest wing was a palace in its own right, one that had been designed to woo dignitaries, ambassadors and other VIPs of interest to the Syndicate.

Iason realized it was a shame he did not use the guest wing, especially now that he no longer cared about what had happened between Anori and Raoul. But Iason's home life had become so deviant he was reluctant to give outsiders access to it, and he had become even more private since his acquisition of Riki. In truth, the Blondie found that he did not care for the company of the Elites as much as that of his beloved pet.

Iason opened the first suite on the right and led Enyu inside. The Xeronian entered, eyes widening as he took in the luxurious accommodations: silken sheets on an immense bed, a miniature bar and kitchenette, a holographic projector, a furnished living area and a private water closet. All just for him?

"The kitchenette has not been used in years, so if you want food or drink you'll need to bring it from the main kitchen for now. The bar should be fully stocked, but you are limited to one drink a day, after sunset. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Master."

The Blondie studied him for a moment, his unusual attire attracting his attention. The Xeronian wore a long flowing robe of a shimmering, golden fabric that was belted at his narrow waist, almost in the style of the ancient Amoians.

"I'll have a tailor brought in tomorrow to draw up your wardrobe."

"Would you like me to undress now?" Enyu asked boldly.

A little taken aback at this, Iason paused before replying. He looked directly into the young pet's sea-green eyes, which in the subdued lighting of the suite had a feline quality, his elliptical pupils dilating slightly.

"I meant, would you like to examine me for flaws?"

The Blondie was tempted. He was quite curious to see the beautiful Xeronian in his natural state, although he knew Riki would be furious if he discovered them. It was, however, standard protocol to inspect a new pet; there was nothing odd in Enyu's suggesting it. He nodded.

"Proceed."

Smiling slightly, Enyu slowly untied his belt. His robe opened and then, with a shrug of his shoulders, slid to the floor.

Iason could not help but admire the handsome form of his new pet. He was long-limbed and sleek, with a decidedly sensual quality, and looked to be extraordinarily fit, his abdomen and pelvic region enticingly carved with tiny hollows. His upper body was perfectly sculpted, not bulky or overly muscular. The Blondie's eyes were instinctively drawn to his genitals, where an unmistakable erection was in progress. It pleased him that Enyu became aroused simply by his scrutiny.

"Turn around," he whispered.

Enyu did so, offering a view even more appealing. The pet's substantial, smooth buttocks begged to be fondled and spread. Iason felt a powerful desire to taste the lovely Xeronian and then plunder him with his own fully matured erection.

As if cognizant of his thoughts, Enyu spread his legs and bent forward, resting his torso on the back of a chair to offer his Master a better view of his charms.

"I see no flaws," the Blondie announced, turning abruptly to leave the suite, his emotions confused. He felt strangely aroused, more than usual, although as he returned to the great hall, his erection began to soften. It was almost as if simply being near the Xeronian stimulated a sexual response he was unable to control. But once he was away from the pet, his desire faded. He decided it must have something to do with Xeronian physiology; Enyu was most likely emitting some sort of pheromone.

Iason was trembling. Was it from being near the Xeronian? Or perhaps he was still feeling anxious about what had happened to Riki, despite having him safely back at the penthouse. Although he had managed to save his pet, what if he had not been able to find



him in time? Would Raoul have carried out his threat to kill him? Somehow, Iason could not believe he would have been that cold-hearted. Raoul knew how much Riki meant to him. It was one thing for him to be jealous of Riki, but quite another to actually *kill* him. He suspected that the Blondie would have continued to torture him for a few hours, but that, in the end, Raoul would have returned his beloved pet to him.

This belief, that Raoul would not have carried out his darkest threats, helped calm some of Iason's anger toward his former lover. But he was still angry. He couldn't help but feel that he had not punished Raoul enough.

The Blondie called down to the pavilion to order food for his pets and then sent an outgoing to Katze, using an Independent connection to the eunuch's off-list handheld.

"Yes?" Katze sounded tired and stressed.

"How is he?"

"Out of surgery. He had internal injuries."

"Is he stable?"

"For the moment. They're making me leave now."

"What's the prognosis?"

"Don't know. They're being evasive. And they keep pressing for details about how it happened."

"And?"

"I didn't tell them anything."

"Good. Keep this matter private. I don't want to hear anything about it on the Channel."

"I figured as much. Did you find Riki?"

"Yes. He's home now. A bit damaged, but nothing serious."

"And Raoul?" Katze tried to keep his anger from sounding in his voice, though he instinctively clenched his hand into a fist.

"He's alive."

For the first time that day, Katze smiled. From Iason's cryptic comment, he discerned that Raoul had taken a beating. He couldn't help but take some pleasure in the thought, though he knew it was inappropriate to voice his own views on the subject. He only wished *he* could have been the one doing the honors.

"Katze. I need you to come here. I need you to take over Daryl's duties while he's hospitalized."

Surprised, Katze hesitated for a moment. "What about work?"

"Don't worry about it. I need you here."

"Sure."

Iason heard the click of a lighter and then Katze's distinctive, deep inhalation as the auburn-haired youth lit up a smoke.

"Jupiter has sent me a gift—a pet from Xeron. I need you to help me with him."

"Xeronian, huh?" Katze's interest was piqued, though only mildly. Any other day this would have intrigued him—but not today. "Bet he's gorgeous."

"He seems unpredictable somehow. I can't put my finger on it exactly. I don't want any trouble."

Katze could only guess what the Blondie meant by "any trouble." But something in Iason's voice told him that he was disturbed by the Xeronian pet. "I'll watch him," he answered and then waited, half-expecting Iason to say something about his missed punishment session. He'd managed to get out of his whipping, at least for that night. And what about Daryl? Surely Iason wouldn't make him take more punishment after being so seriously injured.

But Iason simply disconnected without further comment and then went to check on Riki, finding him fast asleep again. He tried to rouse the mongrel when his food arrived, but Riki was dead to the world, the opiates Iason had given him finally taking full effect. So the Blondie put the tray of food outside Enyu's room, knocking and then leaving before the Xeronian had a chance to answer. He returned to the Master bedroom, undressed, and climbed into bed with his pet.



AFTER SPENDING THE NIGHT at the Taming Tower, Lord Am finally woke at dawn, moaning. Despite his pain, he already felt the effects of the acceleration and was anxious to leave. He got up, pushing Yui

away when the boy attempted to help him, his pride already making him feel shamed over his earlier weakness.

“How did you get here?”

“I took your roadhugger. It’s parked in Emergency.”

“We’d better take that one then, or Omaki will be an ass and give me a ticket.”

Yui wisely made no reply to this, following his Master to the vehicle.

“You drove here on your own?” Raoul asked, surprised, as they climbed into the car.

“I put it on automatic,” Yui replied, feeling a little proud of his accomplishment. In truth, he had been frightened out of his mind on the Tanagura and Midas freeways, even on the less traveled automatic route. He had stared down at the traffic below, marveling at how fast the vehicles traveled.

Raoul nodded, a little impressed. He could perhaps entrust Yui to more than he had previously.

“I’ll have Omaki drive my hovercraft back,” he murmured. Although he knew they could have driven separately, he wanted Yui next to him.

As he pulled out of the Taming Tower, he realized that he and Yui had never gone anywhere together in a vehicle before. The Blondie was accustomed to driving alone, and he found Yui’s presence relaxing.

He looked over at the youth, marveling at his physical beauty: his shiny, light brown hair, vividly green eyes and refined, almost princely features.

Lord Am had acquired Yui at the Manatung Orphanage in Midas five years before. As soon as he set eyes on the boy, he knew he wanted him. Yui had agreed to modification without hesitation; he had grown up an orphan and had never known the luxuries that Raoul offered him. Yui had been attractive enough then, but now he was simply breathtaking.

The Taming Tower had been a turning point for them as well. Although neither of them spoke for a long time, there was already a difference in their relationship. Raoul could not quite put his finger on it, though he did feel grateful to Yui.

No, it was more than that. He had found the boy's gentle touch comforting. And, strangely, he was beginning to have *certain thoughts*. Erotic thoughts.

Yui puzzled over why his Master kept looking at him, his heart beating a little faster each time he did so. Surely he was mistaken, but it almost seemed as though Raoul was considering him *sexually*.

With rather surprising nonchalance, Raoul reached over and put his hand on the boy's thigh. Yui allowed this without comment, although his heart was pounding fast. Raoul said nothing but began moving his hand a little, caressing him slowly.

Merely touching Yui in this forbidden way was deeply arousing to the Blondie, who began to tremble as the ramifications of his actions penetrated his mind. As if stung, Raoul withdrew his hand, again without a word.

Yui made no sound or movement, acting as though nothing had happened. Inside, he experienced a flurry of emotions. His Master had touched him. *Suggestively*. It was too much to hope for. And the way he had looked at him—the eunuch was certain now that the gleam in Lord Am's eyes had been lust. He swallowed, trying to make sense of what was happening and longing for his Master to touch him again.

Raoul was mulling over Yui's reaction to him. He hadn't protested, hadn't moved, hadn't said anything. Did that mean he didn't feel anything or had no views on what had just transpired? Did that mean that if he wanted to go even further, Yui would submit to him without resistance?

For Raoul, the pursuit of forbidden pleasures was almost an artistic mandate. First he and Iason had shared an illicit union. Then Iason had become enamored of Riki and soon all of Eos knew he was bedding the pet, much to Raoul's annoyance. He only badgered Iason about it because he was jealous, not because it was forbidden, although he did worry about Jupiter. And then Raoul had been invited to join in.

Taking Riki had completely changed his perspective on tasting other forbidden pleasures. It seemed almost natural that he would turn to Yui next.

They arrived at the Eos Tower and made for his floor. Once inside, Yui was startled when Raoul grabbed him from behind, pulling him close, his hands roaming up and down his body. He gasped when the Blondie began kissing his neck.

Bending close to his ear, Lord Am whispered, "Undress."

Obeying without hesitation, Yui untied his belt and slipped off his robe. He felt the air on his exposed flesh as Raoul stepped back to appraise him. Then he felt the warmth of his Master's hands as Raoul began caressing him and pressing his buttocks apart.

"Turn around," Raoul commanded, unfastening his trousers to reveal himself.

Yui did so, looking up into his eyes with such gentleness that the great Blondie's heart softened in a way it never had before. He reached down and stroked Yui's face and then took hold of his hand, guiding it to his erection.

Although Yui wanted to love his Master, he did not know how. All he could do was try to imitate what he had seen pets do to one another. Kneeling, he wrapped his fingers around the Blondie's girth. Raoul immediately placed his hand over Yui's, repositioning it.

"Like this."

Yui looked up uncertainly at the towering Blondie, unsure what to do next. Raoul found his innocence and hesitation charming. He was anxious to have his way with him, as soon as he was not quite so sore. He kept his own hand over Yui's, showing him how he wanted to be stroked. "Grip me a little tighter. Yes. Just like that."

A bit of essence erupted from the Blondie and Yui instinctively licked it.

"Ohhh," Lord Am moaned, excited. "Good boy. Keep doing that with your tongue, all around the head."

"Yes, Master."

These submissive words, along with the beautiful youth's shy lingual explorations, were almost enough to take Raoul to the brink. They had barely started and already he wanted to release.

"Open your mouth," he whispered urgently.

Yui obeyed, admitting and pleasuring him eagerly, a sight extraordinarily stimulating to his Blondie Master. And as Raoul

ejaculated into his mouth, far sooner than he had intended, he realized that his relationship with Yui would never again be the same.



RIKI WOKE TO THE COMFORTING SMELLS of breakfast cooking and the aroma of freshly-brewed coffee.

"Mmmm...I'm starving," he mumbled, realizing suddenly that he had missed his dinner the night before.

It took him a moment to remember what had happened the previous night, but when he did, he was surprised at how good he felt. Strangely, he felt better than he had in ages. He felt *younger* even, full of life, and without any pain whatsoever.

He looked over at Iason, who was still sound asleep. Riki marveled over how breathtaking the Blondie looked while sleeping. Mischievously, he pulled the covers from him so he could get a look at his handsome body.

Iason opened his eyes, squinting from the light. He realized that he was lying completely exposed and that his pet was ogling him. "Morning, love," he whispered, his voice raspy from sleep.

"I hope you don't want sex," Riki announced, "because I want breakfast first."

"If I want sex, we're having sex," Iason replied. "In fact, we might have it now just because of that remark."

"You have to catch me first!" Jumping up from his bed, his pet ran naked out of the bedroom into the great hall.

"Riki!" Iason scolded, but he couldn't suppress a smile. "Put some clothes on this instant!"

"You like me naked," came the mongrel's saucy reply. "Anyway, I thought we were having sex."

Giggling like a boy, Riki proceeded to streak around the hall, suddenly skidding to a halt when he saw Enyu.

The Xeronian was watching him from the corner of the room where he had quietly found a seat, interested in Riki's exhibition. He was rather surprised at how well the mongrel looked. What had

happened to the bruises he had seen the night before? Was it normal for Amoians to heal so quickly?

Iason emerged from the bedroom wearing only a pair of flowing silk trousers. The sight of the gorgeous Blondie so scantily clad, his muscles rippling beneath his soft blond hair, excited Enyu. He was reaching his interval, which meant that he was easily aroused. He had masturbated twice that morning already, and now he longed to fondle himself again, but dared not—not without Iason’s consent. He might have to retreat to his room once again.

By his reckoning, the new moon was in two days. Once it arrived, only chains could keep him from copulating whenever and wherever he wished. Even if his hands were restrained, he would still ejaculate. It was impossible to stop. And his new Master would be unable to resist him then. Enyu smiled at the thought.

Thinking the smile was directed at him, Riki scowled. “What are you smiling at?” he demanded, hands on his hips.

Katze emerged from the kitchen and, seeing Riki completely naked with his legs apart in a defensive stance and his penis shy and drooping, burst out laughing. It was the first time he had laughed in days, and it felt good. He was, in fact, a bit relieved to see that the mongrel seemed to be in high spirits. Riki’s backside was bruised, but not as badly as Katze had expected it would be. Either Raoul had gone easy on him, or Iason had already applied a massive dose of metabolic acceleration.

Riki, finding Katze’s laughter infectious, began laughing as well, thrusting his pelvis disrespectfully toward Enyu as though celebrating his inappropriate nakedness. Then he stopped, moving a little closer and bending to look at the pet’s face.

“What the—what the fuck is wrong with your eyes?”

“I’m Xeronian.”

“You look like a freaking cat!”

Iason came up behind Riki and gave him a slight spank, barely smacking him but making the punished mongrel wince nevertheless. “Get dressed,” he ordered, his voice now firm and uncompromising.

Riki started to obey, stomping off grumpily, and then stopped.

“Hey! Katze, how’s Daryl doing?”

Katze shook his head. "I'm just getting ready to call again. They won't give me any information for another 45 minutes when the day shift starts, because they claim I've already called too many times. But he was stable last night when I left."

"Raoul's a dickhead," Riki announced. "Although you should have seen Daryl! He jumped on Raoul's back and bit his ear!"

At this, Katze managed a slight smile. It would almost be funny, if Daryl hadn't been so seriously injured.

"Riki, I told you to get dressed," Iason chided.

"I'm going!" the mongrel muttered. "Sheesh! I was just asking about Daryl."

"You cleaned up," Iason noted, grateful to Katze for taking care of the mess in the great hall.

Katze nodded. It had been awful to wipe up the blood where Daryl had lain, but he couldn't stand the sight of it, and the stench of Riki's urine all over the floor was nothing short of revolting. He had slept in Daryl's room, feeling some comfort just lying in his lover's bed, but it had been a long, hard night. He was beside himself with worry over Daryl and anxious to return to the hospital.

Unable to sleep, he had risen early and cooked an enormous breakfast: eggs, bacon, hotcakes, krevlians, biscuits, sausage, yuntungs, sweet rolls and, of course, coffee.

Katze's breakfast turned out to be just what everyone needed. Riki was ravenous because he hadn't eaten anything since lunch the day before. On top of this, his acceleration treatment had stimulated his appetite.

Enyu was similarly drawn to the table, his metabolism revved up for his interval, which gave him a nearly insatiable appetite. He had been surprised at the double order of food left at his door the night before, wondering if his Master had guessed that he was close to his interval. Enyu had eaten all of it, including both pieces of pie and the frozen creams.

Even Iason was more interested in breakfast than usual; he had missed dinner the previous evening as well.

"Sit down, Katze," Iason ordered, motioning to a chair after the auburn-haired youth had served them.



Thus commenced the first breakfast among the odd crew: a mongrel pet and a Xeronian, the leader of the Black Market underground—recently resuming attendant duties—and the Head of the Syndicate, Iason Mink.

“This is bloody brilliant, Katze,” Riki proclaimed.

“Riki. Don’t talk with food in your mouth,” Iason scolded. “Really, pet, I shouldn’t have to tell you that.”

Enyu’s lips twitched at this reprimand, which immediately garnered Riki’s attention.

“What the fuck are you smiling at?”

Enyu wisely chose not to answer.

“Hey! I’m talking to *you*, cat-boy!” The mongrel pointed his fork at Enyu.

Iason grabbed his hand, slamming it down to the table, and then bent to whisper in his ear.

“That’s enough. Understood?”

Sulking, Riki shot Enyu a black look, infuriated when the Xeronian gazed back at him with unveiled disdain.

“But...he’s looking at me...*that way*,” Riki whispered.

As soon as Iason turned to Enyu, the youth’s face was all innocence, eyes wide.

The Blondie gave his mongrel pet a warning glance and resumed eating. The moment Iason looked away, Enyu wrinkled his nose at Riki, delighted with how easily he became flustered. The Xeronian had given up on his plan to win the mongrel over. Teasing him was much more entertaining.

“Look at him now!” Riki yelled, punching Iason in the arm and causing him to drop his utensil.

“Riki!” Iason bellowed, rising and yanking the mongrel to his feet.

“But he—”

“Hush!” Annoyed, Iason dragged him off to his bedroom, closing the door behind them.

Enyu and Katze both listened, hoping to hear what was going on.

Katze considered the Xeronian pet before him, wondering what had just transpired. He had been far too engrossed in his worries about Daryl to notice what had gone on between the two pets. There

was something about Enyu he didn't like, and he suspected the youth had deliberately provoked Riki.

Enyu refused to make eye contact with him. He was, in fact, quite uncomfortable with an attendant eating at the table with him and wondered why Iason allowed it. The Blondie was quite unorthodox in more ways than one, it seemed. Enyu sensed the eunuch wanted to make conversation with him and he hoped to discourage this by ignoring him and sending out negative, repelling energy.

Inside Iason's bedroom, Riki was pleading his case to his irritated Master, who was trying to decide what to do with him.

"You're not seriously going to punish me, are you?" Riki protested. "After all I've been through? I'm still injured!"

"If you're well enough to behave inappropriately, you're well enough to be punished."

"What a rip-off!" Riki wailed. "And I didn't even *do* anything! He was the one making faces!"

"Riki," Iason sighed. "I can't have the two of you fighting like children. I'll never have any peace."

"I hate him! Why don't you get rid of him?"

"He was a gift from Jupiter," Iason answered, his voice lowering.

"So? Tell her you don't want him. Tell Jupiter her gift sucks! Ow! Let go of my arm, that hurts!"

"I want you to behave. Are you listening to me?"

"This is so unfair!"

"Riki! Stop fighting me!"

"Stop acting like you're going to spank me, then!"

The Blondie sighed, exasperated. Riki needed *some* sort of punishment, at least to curb such unruly behavior from the start, if they were all going to survive in the penthouse together. But he knew his pet was too bruised to tolerate much discipline.

Compromising, he let Riki keep his pants up and held him standing, arms pinned to his back, as he administered a series of firm smacks to his sore rump. It was just enough of a spanking to elicit yelps of protest.

Riki thrust his pelvis forward, moving up onto his toes in a futile attempt to escape his Master's arm. It was hardly his most brutal

spanking, but to the mongrel's punished flesh it was almost as effective. Wailing, Riki struggled in the Blondie's grip, the injustice of his punishment nearly as upsetting to him as the pain. He hated Enyu. And the thought that Enyu could hear him being punished filled him with rage. No doubt the Xeronian delighted in his misery.

One thing Riki knew: he would get even.

His punishment doled out, Iason released Riki's arms, bending down to shake him.

"Now you mind me, Riki. I mean it. Next time I'll put you over my knee, bruises or no," he warned.

Riki made no reply, furious at once again being treated like a child and determined to get his revenge, even if it meant more punishment.

Enyu did indeed relish the sounds of his rival pet's cries and was unable to suppress a triumphant smile from creeping onto his lips.

"I wouldn't be too overjoyed, if I were you," Katze advised. "Master Iason won't hesitate to do the same to you, if you give him cause."

"I don't know what you mean. Why would I give my Master any cause to punish me? I'm not an uncouth mongrel like Riki."

"No," Katze replied thoughtfully. "You're not."

The bedroom door hummed open and Iason returned to the table. Riki was some time in coming, feeling too humiliated to join them right away, but at the same time jealous of any interaction that might be going on between Enyu and Iason. Eventually the Blondie solved his dilemma for him by demanding that he return to the table and finish his breakfast.

Staring down at the floor, Riki slunk to the table, wincing as he sat down. He was so humiliated, he feared he might cry. Mortified, he stared at his plate, trying to regain control of his volatile emotions. He became aware that Iason had poured him some juice.

When Riki continued to sit, motionless, Iason took hold of his hands, guiding him to his utensils.

Then the Blondie bent over and whispered softly in his ear, "Be a good pet. Finish your breakfast. I'll give you a nice surprise tonight." Under the table, Iason surreptitiously slid a hand across his thigh, caressing him suggestively.

Smiling, Riki resumed eating.

Enyu watched this exchange jealously. Riki's punishment hadn't changed the intimacy between the Blondie and the mongrel, which was a source of great mystification to him. If anything, it seemed to have added a new dynamic to their relationship that day.

He couldn't put his finger on it, but there was something almost erotic about what he had just witnessed—the Master carting off his pet for punishment behind closed doors and then both of them returning to the table, Riki sulking while his Master fussed over him, and then Iason whispering something pleasing enough to elicit a smile from the mongrel.

It was almost a game of some sort, and while Enyu was jealous, he was also intrigued.

And now...aroused.

"Master Iason," Enyu said softly.

"Yes?" The Blondie did not look at him but continued eating.

"May I please go to my room?"

Enyu was desperate to relieve himself; the sight of Iason's bare chest beneath the Blondie's long hair was simply too much.

"You may." Again, no eye contact.

"His room? What does he mean, *his* room?" Riki demanded.

"I put him in the guest wing."

"What! You opened the guest wing?!"

Riki leapt to his feet, excited to finally see the mysterious "guest wing" that had remained off-limits since his arrival at the penthouse. The mongrel had tormented many a housekeeper in his fruitless attempts to gain access to it.

"Sit down," Iason commanded sternly.

"But I'm finished!"

"Riki," the Blondie warned.

Reluctantly, his pet sat down again and then began stuffing his face to clear his plate.

"Stop eating like an animal," Iason chided.

Enyu rose and tried to leave the table unnoticed, hoping his immense erection would escape scrutiny.

No such luck.

Riki laughed, pointing. "Look at cat-boy's hard-on!"

Everyone looked, much to Enyu's mortification.

He lowered his head. "I am sorry, Master Iason. But...I'm close to my interval."

"When does it begin?" Iason asked, trying to keep his composure, although the sight of his new pet's arousal sent a new surge of carnal agitation to his loins.

"The new moon, Master. In two days."

"What the fuck are you talking about?" Riki giggled.

"Enyu is Xeronian. They have a five-day rutting period."

"Interval," Enyu corrected softly.

Iason shot him a withering look, not caring to be corrected by his new pet. "What's that?" he said sharply.

"We call it an *interval*, Master. Forgive me, I spoke out of turn."

Riki was beside himself with mirth at this discovery, laughing so hard he fell off his chair and onto the floor. "He ruts! Oh fuck! I'm gonna die! Cat-boy's going into heat!"

Even Katze, who had been rather somber and withdrawn during breakfast, managed a smile.

"Riki," Iason sighed.

Wiping tears from his eyes and climbing back into his chair, Riki continued to suppress snorts that exploded from him despite his best efforts to regain his composure. "So he's off to his room to shake his smut rattle."

"Is that so?" Iason demanded.

"With your permission, Master Iason."

"You didn't ask his permission to jerk off before," Riki pointed out helpfully.

Enyu clenched his teeth and closed his eyes, feeling uncomfortably close to release.

"Oh god! He's gonna spill right here! He's gonna stain his pretty dress!" Riki announced.

Iason's eyes were drawn to Enyu's bulge, which was most definitely moving.

"May I go?" Enyu pleaded.

"Make him jerk off in front of us!" Riki suggested, excited. "That's what you made *me* do. Make cat-boy masturbate!"

Heart pounding faster, Iason leaned over and whispered into Riki's ear. "Do you really want to see that?"

"Yeah," Riki whispered, delighting in the prospect of Enyu's humiliation, the possibility that the Xeronian might *enjoy* providing such an exhibition never even occurring to him.

The Blondie slid his hand between Riki's legs, caressing him, and then turned to look at Enyu.

"You'll relieve yourself here. Disrobe."

"As you wish, Master," Enyu answered, bowing to hide his smile. He was thrilled with the opportunity to arouse his new Master, although not particularly pleased to have the mongrel or the strange attendant in the audience.

"Excuse me," Katze murmured, rising to clear the table. Had it been any other time, he would have enjoyed watching the Xeronian. But he couldn't now. It didn't seem right—not without Daryl.

Iason did not even acknowledge his departure, his gaze now locked on the young pet. Enyu untied his robe and let it slide from his body. The sight of his beautiful masculine lines elicited admiration from both Master and pet, though rather reluctantly from Riki.

With deliberate provocation, Enyu widened his stance, grasping his immense erection in his hands and thrusting into it suggestively. He pleased himself with long, sensual strokes, increasing in speed until he began pumping himself with unmistakable intent. He directed his every move at the lovely Blondie, who appeared to watch him impassively, his face expressionless.

In fact, Iason was tremendously aroused by Enyu, particularly his suggestive thrusting and the smoldering lust in his eyes. He spread his thighs apart, wanting to adjust himself but not wanting Riki to notice. Finally, he could no longer resist and moved a hand to his developing erection.

The mongrel was equally entranced with Enyu's performance and had become aroused as well, though completely against his will.

Iason's hand movement immediately caught his attention, however, and he watched jealously as his Master began stroking himself. This wasn't turning out as he had planned. Enyu didn't

seem humiliated, and Iason was most definitely aroused. And now *he* was aroused too...by stupid cat-boy.

Enyu closed his eyes and threw back his head, moaning and pumping himself without restraint.

Riki resented the fact that Iason seemed mesmerized by Enyu's performance, hated the way his thumb brushed across his silk pants as he fondled himself. Irritated, he scooted closer to Iason and nuzzled up against him possessively.

The Blondie smiled down at him, amused by his obvious ploy to solicit his attention. "What is it, pet? Are you jealous now?"

Riki's reply was to slide his hand inside Iason's silk pants.

Surprised, Iason gasped, thrilled when his pet began stroking him. "Good boy," he whispered in his ear. "I like that. You're such a good pet." Now distracted from Enyu, the Blondie began kissing Riki's throat.

The sight of Master and pet loving one another sent Enyu over the edge. He groaned, his semen shooting across the table. Iason did not even notice.

The Blondie pulled Riki onto his lap, kissing him furiously. "Riki," he moaned between kisses. "I want you so terribly."

"Can I have that surprise *now*?" the mongrel whispered back.

"Do you *want* it now?"

"Yeah. I want it."

Not needing further invitation, Iason stood up, carrying Riki to his bedroom. The mongrel wrapped his legs around his Master's waist and looked over the Blondie's shoulder at Enyu, who regarded their departure with obvious disappointment. Smiling triumphantly at the Xeronian, Riki began nibbling Iason's throat, inciting the Blondie to pick up his pace.

"So is the surprise what I think it is?" Riki asked, once they were inside the bedroom. "I get to call the shots, right?"

"Yes. You may do whatever you like."

"Awesome!"

"What would you like, my pet?"

"Lie facedown and spread your legs," came the immediate reply.

Smiling, the Blondie obeyed.

"This is oil, right?" Riki asked, holding up a new vial that was sitting on the bedside table.

"Yes."

"Cool."

Riki poured the oil on himself and then groaned, stopping, his oiled hand held mid-air. "Fuck."

He was so aroused he was about ready to ejaculate, the lubrication of the oil pushing him even closer to the edge. For a moment he simply waited in agony, trying to get control of his arousal. He was frozen like a statue, afraid to move or breathe.

Iason couldn't help but laugh softly at his pet's plight.

"It's not fucking funny!" Riki cried, annoyed.

"I am sorry, my love," Iason replied. "I didn't mean to hurt your mongrel pride."

"I suppose you Blondies never have this problem," Riki growled. "Everything you do is so bloody perfect."

"Not so," the Blondie replied softly.

"Oh yeah? Have you ever ejaculated before you meant to?"

"Oh yes. With you, in fact. It is nothing...to be ashamed of."

The conversation had helped Riki to regain control, and now he pressed himself up to Iason's entrance, sliding in quickly with an almost anguished groan.

"Fucking Jupiter," he breathed. He lay on top of the Blondie as he thrust into him, moaning with every movement. He felt like he was in pain, trying to keep from releasing. He wasn't going to last. Riki wished that, at least once, he could really give Iason a good ramming without having to worry about coming too soon.

"Iason," he gasped, "will you let me fuck you again later?"

"Yes, my love."

Excited by this promise, Riki abandoned all restraint and plunged into the Blondie with enthusiasm. Iason began his exquisite squeezing and twitching against him, coaxing him easily to orgasm, the mongrel's hot semen pumping into the tight passage.

Iason only allowed his pet a few minutes to rest before he insisted on being pleased. He was so aroused his hands trembled as he held his hardened cock up against the mongrel's lips.



"You're ready, it seems," Riki noted, smiling, flicking a tongue across the Blondie's already wet head as he slid a hand around his engorged girth.

"Yes," Iason conceded, anxiously playing with Riki's dark hair.

"I guess cat-boy's little show got you all excited."

"I was more aroused by your asking for it," the Blondie answered, touching a finger to his lips. "Open for me, now."

Riki took him into his mouth, gently sucking, as his tongue slid expertly around the head in slow, sensual circles.

Iason closed his eyes, his lips parting with a soft moan. Suddenly, he longed for something a little more intense. Grabbing onto Riki's head, he slid completely into the mongrel's mouth, and then began thrusting—slowly at first, then faster, until he was taking him full in the mouth.

Riki relaxed his throat and allowed Iason to do as he wished, feeling a little surprised, since the Blondie usually preferred something a little slower and more gentle.

Groaning and gasping with each thrust, Iason closed his eyes and threw back his head. Finally, he climaxed in the mongrel's mouth, a release so deliciously sweet that tiny post-coital shudders of pleasure continued down his back for some time afterwards.

He looked down at Riki, who watched him with shining eyes.

"I take it you enjoyed that."

"It was *perfect*."

"Come here," Riki commanded, holding his arms out to him. The Blondie eased down onto the bed and into his arms, and for a long time they simply lay together thus.

"Iason? Are you attracted to Enyu?" Riki finally asked.

"It is nothing worth speaking of."

"I guess that's a yes, then," the mongrel sulked.

"You're the one I love," Iason reminded him with a soft whisper, thrilled with Riki's transparent jealousy.

"If you love me, then get rid of him."

"It's not so easily done. He's a gift from Jupiter, as I've already explained, love."

"That's all the more reason. I don't trust Jupiter."

Iason considered this for a moment, privately agreeing with his pet's proffered analysis. He smiled. "Are you jealous, Riki?"

"Yes, I'm fucking jealous." Riki rolled onto his back stiffly and dramatically, sighing loudly.

The Blondie reached out and slowly stroked the side of his face with his fingers. "You have nothing to be jealous about. I've told you. You're my special pet."

Somewhat pacified by this, Riki was silent for a moment, enjoying Iason's caress. "Did you mean it when you said I could fuck you again later?"

"You may do as you wish for the next three nights," Iason promised. "You deserve that much for all you've been through."

"I *have* been through a lot," Riki agreed, suddenly deciding that he wanted a bit more pampering. "Now that you mention it, I'm starting to feel sore again. Can I have another O-6?"

"You may have one in a few hours."

"Okay," the mongrel agreed happily. In truth, he was only feeling slightly sore.

Back in the great hall, Enyu stared at the closed door to the Master bedroom, fuming. He had given a delicious performance—he was sure of it. But then Riki had to crawl on his Master's lap and ruin everything. Iason had not even acknowledged him when leaving the room. All he cared about was that stupid mongrel.

"You'll never come between them."

Enyu turned to see Katze regarding him with obvious contempt. He was leaning back against the wall, arms crossed on his chest.

"Are you addressing me, attendant? It's *Sir* Enyu."

"The name's Katze. Why don't you get off your high horse?"

"How dare you speak to me that way! I'll have Master beat you."

"Go ahead. Tell Master Iason. But you'd better realize things in this household aren't like they are elsewhere. He's likely to pull out his taming stick and give *you* a few hard whacks just for wasting his time with your pet nonsense. Iason isn't like other Masters."

"So it appears," Enyu sniffed. "Just as Jupiter said."

"What's that?" Now Katze uncrossed his arms, walking toward him. "What did Jupiter say?"

Enyu turned his head, silent.

"I see. Listen up, cat-boy. I don't know what Jupiter had in mind sending you here, but I'm watching you. If you hurt Riki or Iason in any way, you're dead. Got it?"

The Xeronian knelt to retrieve his robe, donning it with deliberate slowness as he feigned disinterest in the unveiled threat.

"And you can clean up your own smut juice," Katze added, throwing a rag onto the table. "I'm just here on temporary duty. In the future, I'd advise you to know who you're talking to before you start doling out insults."

With that, Katze turned on his heel and went out to the balcony to smoke.

Enyu stared after him with pure hatred and then looked at the rag, uncertain. Did the attendant seriously expect him to clean up after himself? The eunuch had said he was here *temporarily*. So where was his regular attendant? He frowned at the rag for some moments, debating. Surely the attendant would be punished for failing to do his duty, wouldn't he? But...what would his Master do when he saw the mess hadn't been cleaned up? And why had there been urine—and *blood*—on the floor the previous night? Had the Blondie beat his pet for making a mess?

Deciding to play it safe, Enyu wiped up his essence and then retreated to his room to brood.

Riki finally emerged from the Master bedroom, immediately heading out to the balcony for a smoke. He found Katze there, getting ready to light up, and they smiled knowingly at one another.

"Sounded fun," Katze remarked.

"It was." Riki offered him a Dark Baccalias and Katze accepted, putting his own smoke in his pocket for later.

"Yeah?"

"I'll tell you about it sometime," Riki promised, in a low voice.

Katze nodded, lighting up. Riki did the same, and for some moments they didn't speak, both of them thinking the same thing.

"Have you heard anything?"

"I called this morning. He's stable."

"That's good. Are you going to see him today?"

"Assuming Iason says yes."

"He will. I'd like to go—sometime, that is. I'm sure right now you're the only one Daryl really wants to see."

Katze nodded, smiling.

"It's fun having you here, at least. Especially with cat-boy around."

Katze laughed. "I can't believe you wanted him to jerk off."

"Yeah, well." Riki took a long drag, looking down.

There was a long pause in the conversation.

"Watch out for him, Riki," Katze advised, finally.

"I know."

They smoked together in silence, and then Riki tossed his butt over the ledge. "Well, I'm off to check out cat-boy's room."

Katze gave him a half-hearted salute as a send-off, winking.

Riki sauntered back into the penthouse, immediately heading for the guest wing. He couldn't believe Iason had finally opened the wing, after two years of his begging to see it. Why had the Blondie kept the wing sealed all that time?

As he approached the wing and the door hummed open, Riki stopped in his tracks, stunned. How many rooms were there? The mongrel counted. Eleven. Eleven rooms he had never seen before! But the door at the end of the hall drew his attention especially; it seemed different than the others, larger, and as he approached it and it slid open, he could hardly believe his eyes.

The room was dominated by an immense, curved swimming pool—empty at present. The ceiling was covered with skylights. Huge pots and planters littered the room, and Riki guessed they had once housed plants of various kinds. The mosaic tiling on the floor was exquisitely detailed, in rich shades of red, gold and aquamarine.

At one end of the long room was a glass door, and Riki made for it, opening it to find it led to another balcony, much larger than the one off the great hall. In it was a second pool. He saw several large statues, and upon closer examination, he realized they were actually fountains—or would be, once they began pumping water again.

The mongrel was excited by his discovery, although he was confused as to why Iason had not let him see the wing before. It was just like the hidden Observatory, kept from him for no apparent

reason. How many secrets, he wondered, were still undiscovered in Iason's penthouse?

Riki went back inside to the corridor, determined to find Enyu's room. As it happened, the Xeronian was just coming out of his room when he approached.

Without ceremony, the mongrel entered Enyu's suite, brushing past him without a word.

"What are you doing?" Enyu demanded.

Riki stopped cold when he saw the pet's accommodations. "What the fuck?" he cried, eyeing the kitchenette, bar and private bathroom jealously, his gaze next resting on the holographic projector.

"Get out of my room."

The mongrel ignored him and flipped on the projector, a life-size holographic image of two copulating pets suddenly appearing before him. He put his hand into the projection to distort the image.

"Not fair," he said softly, hurt that Iason had given this new pet such luxurious accommodations.

"I said, get out!"

"Fuck you!"

"Filthy mongrel," Enyu spat contemptuously.

"That's it, cat-boy."

Riki lunged for him, managing to knock him down and get a few good punches in before he was lifted roughly by his shirt and set firmly back on the floor by Iason.

"Stop it this instant," the Blondie commanded.

"He *attacked* me," Enyu whimpered, holding his bleeding lip.

Riki did not try to deny the assertion but instead confronted Iason. "How come *he* gets this room?"

"Stop making a fuss," Iason whispered sternly. He fully intended to rectify the situation with the rooms if Riki would only calm down.

"But it's not fair!"

"Riki, did you hear me?"

"Fuck you, Iason. You're an asshole," Riki snapped, giving him a little push, too pissed to care about the consequences.

A smile curled onto Enyu's lips at these fatal words, shocked that the mongrel had actually dared assault his Master. He watched with

delight as Iason grabbed his pet above the elbow, yanking him toward the door.

“That’s it, pet. You’re really in for it now.”

The Blondie dragged off a furious Riki, who struggled futilely against his equally angry Master.

Enyu followed them quietly, smiling.

## After His Breakfast Spanking

WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, Iason escorted his pet from Enyu's room, making for the great hall. Suddenly Riki, in an attempt to escape certain punishment, wriggled out of his grasp, dashing down the hall toward the pool area.

Iason sprinted after him, catching him with ease and pinning him up against the wall. He bent close to him, for a moment distracted by his distinctive, earthy scent. The Blondie had a sudden desire to taste his pet's mouth, but he fought back the urge.

"Did you really think you could evade me, pet? There's no place you can hide where I won't find you. And for that little stunt, you've just doubled your punishment."

"I'm not your pet," Riki announced.

"Don't tell me we're back to this old game again," Iason replied, irritated. "You most certainly *are* my pet."

"You can't have two pets. And you just gave the best room to cat-boy, so I guess *he's* your pet now."

"Quit being difficult."

"I'll be difficult if I want! You're so unfair! Giving him a holo-projector on top of it. Prick!"

Gripping him painfully above the elbow, Iason led his unruly charge into the great hall, heading with resolute firmness toward his chair. Riki's words echoed in his head, infuriating him. Only Riki would dare speak to him that way, so openly defiant of his authority in front of his new pet. He was hurt that Riki had turned on him so viciously when they had just loved so sweetly in his bed.

Riki was getting a sound spanking; there was nothing he could do or say to prevent it.

On perceiving his intent, Riki began struggling furiously against him, his efforts failing to even slow the Blondie's pace.

"You never gave me that Opiate-6!" he pointed out, panicked.

"You should have thought of that before."

Riki, suddenly seeming to come to his senses, now changed his tactic, assuming an innocent, injured attitude.

"But I've just been tortured *practically to death*. I'm not healed enough yet," he purred with cunning sweetness, gazing up at the Blondie with wide, martyred eyes.

"I warned you this morning, pet. If you wanted to save your behind from a sound spanking, you should have modified your behavior accordingly."

"This is so bleeding unfair! You're treating him like a freaking prince! And he...he was being a total asshole, all perched so high!"

"That's no excuse, Riki."

Reaching his chair, Iason sat down, pulling his naughty pet roughly over his knee and pinning his arms firmly to his back with one hand.

"I didn't mean what I said."

"But you said it all the same, didn't you?" the Blondie replied, tugging down his pants to his thighs, just above his knees. He felt particularly annoyed with Riki's impudence because it had taken place in front of his new pet, and for that he would make Riki suffer.

"But I always say things like that! You know I don't really mean it!"

"And *you* know I always punish you for it," Iason replied, firmly.

"Give me a break," Riki pleaded. "Please, Iason? Can't you punish me some other way? Please?"

"You're getting spanked. End of discussion."

Though Riki was still bruised, the molecular Accelerator had continued to work its astonishing magic. At this point his injuries had healed considerably from the previous day. Iason examined him with amazement; it was no wonder Accelerator was sold at the pavilion with the paddles and whips, the perfect solution for Masters who enjoyed punishing their pets more frequently than



nature alone would have allowed. Originally developed for hospital use to decrease medical costs and then seized by the military Elite, its micro-technology had rapidly found its way onto the market and now was one of the most requested items on the shelf, according to Yousi. Its popularity was due not only to its healing properties but also its agonizing sting, which was sometimes worse than the punishment itself.

Accelerator could not completely heal a deep branding, however, and the initials burned into his pet's flesh were destined to become scars, which Iason found exceedingly irksome. He needed to do something about it, and soon.

"Don't let *him* watch," Riki begged, mortified that Enyu had followed them into the hall and now witnessed him so humiliatingly positioned over the Blondie's knee, an exultant sneer on his face.

Iason then noticed Enyu and for a moment contemplated whether he should allow the pet to stay or send him to his room.

"He would do well to watch," he remarked finally, giving Enyu a pointed look, "as well as *wipe that smirk off his face*, because this is what happens to naughty pets. That or a good taming, whipping or paddling. Isn't that right, Riki?"

The mongrel sighed, bracing himself for yet another nasty stretch of punishment. Iason's comment had pacified him somewhat and had inspired a new project: provoking Enyu into misbehaving in some manner worthy of hardcore punishment. He fervently hoped Enyu would be unable to tame his smile so he would get a taste of the Blondie's wicked arm.

Far from being frightened by his Master's threat (having never been physically disciplined before and confident that he would never incur displeasure enough to warrant it), Enyu was aroused by the entire situation. He ached to fondle himself and celebrate the unfolding scene more fully but obediently adopted a more somber, chastised demeanor, artfully concealing his delight.

Iason was letting Riki squirm, something he knew his pet hated. Riki could feel the Blondie's hair brushing against his exposed skin, the cool air teasing his bare flesh, and his Master's warm hand resting possessively on his thigh. It was almost erotic, except that he

knew what was coming, and it wouldn't be pleasant. He also knew that no matter what he said at this point, he couldn't get out of being disciplined, which made waiting for the punishment to commence nothing short of agonizing.

After several excruciatingly long moments, and once Riki's heart had really started to pound, the Blondie addressed him in a low, scolding voice.

"You are *never* to address me or physically provoke me in such a disrespectful manner again. Is that quite clear, pet?"

"Yeah."

"What's that?"

"Yes?"

"Yes what?"

"Yes, *Master*," Riki sighed.

"I've given you a little reprieve from my earlier warning, Riki, but *today*, in the company of others, you will address me as *Master* or receive three strikes with the taming stick. Understood?"

"You mean every fucking sentence or what?"

With that, Iason whipped out his taming stick and without further comment gave his pet three sharp strikes to his thighs, much to Riki's anguished dismay. He then slid the taming stick back in its sheath. "I said, *is that understood?*"

"Yes, *Master*."

Riki, while obeying the mandate, was unable to resist a tone of voice that was dangerously close to being disrespectful.

"Ohhh," Iason laughed brokenly. He brushed his fingers tantalizingly down Riki's buttocks to his thighs and then back again, resting his hand threateningly on the mongrel's bare ass. "That was most unwise, don't you think, pet? Have you lost all awareness of where you are, bent over my knee with your pants down to your knees? And your strategy is to provoke me when I'm about to discipline you?" He illustrated his point with a preliminary spank, a smart stinging smack to warn his pet as to what was coming.

"I said Master Iason!" Riki protested.

"Three strikes, Riki."

"I mean, I said Master Iason, *Master!*" Riki tried, desperately.

“Too late, pet.”

Iason whipped out his taming stick again, punishing Riki with three more smarting strikes to his thighs. The mongrel responded to this with another howl of pain.

Enyu gloated over Riki’s castigation, although he wondered about the Blondie’s qualified command “in the company of others.” Did this mean the unruly pet enjoyed special privileges when alone with his Master?

The sight of Riki so humiliatingly exposed and the Blondie’s unhurried approach to discipline was unquestionably erotic, and he was now almost panting, his sex organ painfully inflamed. He held his hands behind his back, clasped together, desperately wanting to pleasure himself but knowing it was not the time to bother his new Master with his request.

The unmistakable sound of punishment had lured Katze into the hall, and he stood, wiping his hands with a towel and shaking his head in disbelief. How had Riki managed to get punished so soon after his breakfast spanking and not a day after he had been abducted by Raoul? Didn’t the mongrel know how to milk a dramatic situation like that? Riki could have enjoyed extensive coddling and special attention from Iason, who had been completely distraught over his disappearance.

Instead, here he was, vulnerably positioned for punishment, warmed up by a taming stick, and in for what promised to be, by Iason’s deliberate slowness in commencing, a serious spanking. Not like his breakfast spanking: an old-fashioned, bare hand to bare bottom over-the-knee hard spanking.

Only Riki could have managed that.

“Just get on with it already,” Riki sighed and then added in a defeated tone, “*Master*.”

“I’ll get on with it when I’m good and ready. But as it happens I’m quite anxious to get on with it, which is actually rather unfortunate for you. I warned you this morning not to misbehave, did I not? I told you this is where you’d end up, and I told you a good hard spanking waited for you here. You chose disobedience. Now you’re going to pay for it, my naughty little pet.”

Thus the spanking finally commenced. The mongrel submitted to it as best as he was able, answering each smack of the Blondie's hand with varying combinations of curses, yelps, sobs, kicks and pleas for mercy, all of which were ignored by Lord Mink, who kept him firmly over his knee until he felt the mongrel had learned his lesson.

Hand burning from the spanking, and a thoroughly corrected pet wailing miserably on his lap, the Blondie finally stopped. Riki sobbed inconsolably, and Iason let him remain over his knees for quite some time to cry out his pain and frustration.

Iason knew that with a new pet watching, he had to come down hard on Riki's unacceptable behavior. Although he sensed that Enyu was not rebellious, he was going to be sure this pet was tamed properly from the start, but to do that he needed to address Riki's more egregious lapses in pet etiquette.

Enyu, after witnessing Riki's punishment at the hands of his handsome Blondie Master, was biting his lip in sexual torment. Iason now considered the Xeronian, who was clearly once again in desperate need of release. Intrigued, he watched him obediently wait for his command, hands behind his back, despite his obvious distress. He nodded his approval. Perhaps Riki could learn something from this new pet.

"Relieve yourself, Enyu," he ordered.

"Here, Master Iason?" the pet asked hopefully.

"Yes."

With shaking fingers, the young pet quickly disrobed, this time less interested in performing. He simply wanted to ejaculate.

Groaning as he touched his engorged member, Enyu began pumping himself without restraint, emitting a series of grunts and moans that escalated quickly into a hypnotic, rhythmic sex cry.

Riki had quieted and now regarded his rival with unabashed fascination. There was something inexplicably compelling about Enyu when he was aroused that intrigued both Master and pet. He almost became more animal than man, the embodiment of sexuality in its most primal form. Although the mongrel hated that he was attracted to the Xeronian, he could not deny that at that precise moment, and despite the discipline he had just endured, he *was*.

Iason was similarly appreciative of Enyu's performance and less puzzled than his pet over his own attraction to him. He guessed the Xeronian was indeed emitting some sort of pheromone that grew in strength as he approached his rut. This would certainly explain why he had found Enyu almost irresistible the night before and why today he had been flooded with prurient thoughts whenever the Xeronian was near, even when he avoided looking at him. He could only imagine what the next few days would bring when the pet reached his interval.

At the present moment, Iason was especially overcome with libidinous impulses. Between his newly-spanked pet still bent over his knee, exposed for his viewing pleasure, and Enyu's masturbation, Iason had developed a formidable erection. When he felt the stirring of Riki's arousal against his thighs, he was suddenly seized with an aching desire to see Riki and Enyu do what pets were meant to do together: copulate.

With a loud, extraordinarily erotic cry, Enyu climaxed, his semen arcing to the floor. Riki shivered, a movement that was not lost on his Master.

Iason stood his pet back up on his feet, Riki's erection now in plain view. Though Enyu had just ejaculated, he regarded the mongrel's state with curiosity and surprise, while Katze discretely offered Riki a badly-needed damp cloth to wipe off his tear-dampened face.

"Now pets," Iason announced. "You will perform for me. Riki. Undress and copulate with Enyu."

Both pets looked equally surprised, staring back at the Blondie as though not quite believing what he'd said.

"Did you hear me? Undress, Riki."

Riki hesitated for a moment, and then looked at Enyu, stroking himself all the while. He didn't understand why, but he *wanted* to obey Iason. He truly wanted to fuck Enyu...almost as though he were under some sort of spell.

With hypnotic languor, he slowly doffed his pants, which had only been partly on anyway and then pulled off his shirt, tossing it aside as he approached the Xeronian.

Enyu would have preferred being the one taking the reins, but he was thrilled that his Master once again wanted him to perform. He turned to him questioningly, waiting for further instruction.

“Bend over the table,” Iason ordered. “The end closest to me.”

Enyu obeyed, resting his torso and hands on the table.

“Spread your legs more,” Iason whispered.

The pet complied by spreading his legs wide, arching his back as he offered himself obediently for conquest, looking back at Riki with a deliberately seductive gaze.

Iason shivered with lust at the view, his hand instinctively moving to his erection.

Riki swallowed hard at the sight of the attractive youth so enticingly positioned, begging to be fucked, at that moment nearly oblivious to their rivalry and his former prejudice against Enyu. He hesitated, looking at Iason for confirmation.

His Master was watching him, fascinated. The look of pure lust in Iason’s eyes was undeniable. He had unfastened his trousers and now pleased himself with sensual, languid strokes. “Go ahead, Riki,” he encouraged softly.

Despite wanting to obey Iason, Riki continued to hesitate, just standing a few feet away from Enyu as he nervously fondled himself. He had never been asked to pair with another pet before and for it to be cat-boy was simply a step he was not quite ready to take.

“Obey me, Riki,” Iason commanded, turning to Katze for assistance. “Katze?”

Katze immediately stepped forward, giving Riki a little push. “Do what Master Iason says,” he ordered. “Didn’t that spanking teach you anything?”

Surprised to be reprimanded by Katze, the mongrel instinctively smiled, his mirth vanishing when the auburn-haired youth answered him with a hard, stinging slap to his face.

Katze stood in front of him, legs wide apart, muscular arms crossed on his chest.

“Didn’t you hear me?” he barked, then grabbed hold of Riki’s hair, pushing him toward Enyu. “You will obey Master’s command, and you will do it *now*!”

Riki had never seen Katze with this face on before, and he hardly knew what to think of it. All he knew was that his slap stung unbelievably. He was now trembling, his heart beating fast, his face stinging from Katze's castigation and his backside still smarting from Iason's dark discipline. Yet he felt exceptionally erotic. Strangely so.

And he felt like fucking Enyu hard, making the little brat scream. Incredibly, that was apparently what Iason wanted him to do. He stepped forward, spreading Enyu's cheeks to locate his entrance. With mongrel-style pragmatism, he spit onto his hands and lubricated himself briefly. Then, without further preparation, he penetrated Enyu, ramming him with vindictive force.

The Xeronian was impossibly tight and hot, gripping him deliciously. Enyu cried out, which only fueled Riki's concupiscence. Grabbing hold of his hips, he began his merciless pillage, impelled now by lust as well as revenge, reveling in the young pet's whimpers and cries.

Iason watched his pets with complete captivation, relishing Riki's roughness with Enyu and marveling over his control. Iason rarely saw this side of his mongrel pet, and he was enjoying watching him take the Xeronian so violently.

"A virgin, huh?" Riki taunted. "Bet it hurts a bit."

Enyu had, in fact, been taken many times, but his physiology was such that penetration was always difficult, his muscles resisting entry. It was thus impossible for a Xeronian to be broken in. And Riki's rather brutal debut had done little to make things easy for him. Enyu resented the mongrel for being so needlessly rough, feeling that he might have enjoyed the sex if Riki hadn't been so bent on punishing him. But he could see that Master Iason took pleasure in their coitus, and he really had no choice but to take it.

Riki found that he had complete command of himself when taking Enyu, unlike his tendency to rush to completion with his Blondie Master. It reminded him of his days as the leader of Bison, when there had always been some new mongrel for him or Guy to initiate into Ceres street life. He had always enjoyed breaking them in hard, with punishing force.

It felt good to be in control again...extremely so. Riki only wished he could take Iason so forcefully. He widened his stance and pulled up on Enyu's smooth hips to achieve deeper penetration, sneering at the Xeronian's voiced objection to his more demanding position.

"Shut up and take it, ya little brat," he hissed, giving Enyu a good hard slap on his rump.

Iason chuckled at Riki's domineering manner, enjoying also the protests and whimpers from Enyu. He was now quite impressed with his pet's endurance. He found it interesting that Riki's inability to last more than a few minutes was not a universal phenomenon among his pairing partners. It pleased the Blondie to know he possessed such power over his pet, that the virile, commanding mongrel he saw now trembled so easily at his slightest touch.

Riki turned to look at his Master. The sight of him so provocatively seated in his chair, legs spread widely and comfortably apart as he stroked himself openly—*sensually*—was the deciding factor in Riki's ascent.

Closing his eyes and letting his head drop back a bit, he climaxed with quiet intensity, gasping softly with each new wave of pleasure that broke forth from his loins. Then he withdrew, shuddering.

"Come here, pet." Iason's voice was now seductively soft and inviting, his harsh, disciplinarian tone cast aside.

Knowing that by "pet" Iason referred to him and *not* Enyu, Riki approached his Master proudly. He was greeted with a pleased smile from the Blondie, who had summoned him for release.

"Sit on my lap," he whispered, patting his thighs.

Riki did so, wincing. Iason solicited a long, sensual kiss from him, guiding his hand to his rigid erection.

The Blondie broke away and then whispered in his ear, "That was very good, pet. I enjoyed watching you."

"Master Iason," Riki whispered back, "am I still your favorite pet?"

Iason smiled. "Of course you are, Riki. Just because I had to punish you doesn't mean my feelings have changed. I am trying to correct you for your own good. And I know I am at fault. I have coddled you and failed to train you as I should. This was a dangerous omission on my part and I am afraid you are not going to



enjoy the taming that's ahead. My advice to you is to obey me fully, otherwise I will have to punish you again. We have a new pet in the household, and a new attendant coming. So when you disobey me or misbehave, I will be forced to correct you with a strong arm, because they will be watching to see what the consequences of disobedience will be."

The Blondie pulled him closer, again whispering into his ear. "Certain things are expected of both of us as Master and pet. Surely you know this. You know the consequences of your actions, yet you persist in your naughtiness, forcing me to punish you." He paused, breathing into his ear, which made Riki shiver. "If you could only behave, pet, I would never have to punish you again, and it would be only pleasure, then, between us."

"I thought you liked punishing me, Master," came the mongrel's saucy reply.

Iason laughed softly. "True; I would still have to punish you every now and then, just for my own pleasure. Now, my little wolf cub, I want you to pleasure me. Get on your knees."

Enyu watched this exchange jealously, fuming. Once again he felt he had gotten the raw end of the deal. At least his ass felt raw, and what had he gotten out of it? His Master had summoned his "pet" to him for special services. Why didn't Master Iason want *him*? When he saw Riki kneel before the handsome Blondie, he couldn't contain himself. "Master Iason," he said boldly, "would you like me to come to you also?"

"If I had wanted you to do so, I would have told you, Enyu," Iason replied without even looking up. His manner produced opposite reactions in his two listening pets; Enyu felt chastised by his Master, Riki vindicated.

Smiling up at Iason, Riki proceeded to pleasure him as sweetly and lovingly as he could, both because he wanted to please Iason and because he knew Enyu was watching. Riki's deliberately tantalizing lingual arts and his gentle, insistent sucking had their intended effect on the Blondie: Iason let out a breathy moan, running his hand through his pet's dark hair.

"Good boy...that's it. What a good pet you are now."

Riki welcomed these praises eagerly. His bottom was still smarting wickedly from Iason's spanking, and his thighs burned from the taming stick. He was determined to avoid the stick again that day, and practiced in his mind affixing "Master" to his comments, a mandate that he knew would be very difficult for him to remember.

It seemed inexplicable to him that Iason suddenly, after over two years, insisted on being addressed thus, even for one day, when he had not issued this edict before. But Iason would have his way—of that much, he was sure.

"Yesss," the Blondie sighed, spreading his legs a little wider as Riki wiggled his tongue erotically against his length, taking him a little deeper into his mouth. "Just like that, pet."

Savoring Iason's every gasp and sigh and the way he ran his hands through his hair with intoxicating urgency, Riki gave him a mongrel-style, down and dirty blow job that had the Blondie moaning in minutes.

"Riki," Iason gasped, closing his eyes.

With that, the Blondie climaxed, hands resting gently on the mongrel's head, his body trembling as his loins expelled his essence in magnificent bursts of rapture. He looked down at Riki, his face contorted with pleasure.

"Yes, my darling pet," he whispered, his voice husky and thick with sex, "swallow every drop, love."

This entire scene was watched in wonderment by Enyu and Katze, both of whom were waiting to be dismissed, but it was as though Iason did not even know they were there. Enyu was fuming with jealousy, and on top of it, he was aroused. *Again*.

Katze was simply curious, enjoying the perverted thrill of watching Riki suck off the powerful Iason Mink, and recalling, with some mixed emotions, his own turn with the inscrutable Blondie, as well as with Riki.

When Iason continued to ignore them, pulling the mongrel back onto his lap and whispering into his ear and then nuzzling against him, Katze nudged Enyu's elbow.

"Go to your room," he commanded.

Although Enyu didn't care to be taking orders from his attendant, he was anxious to go, and he was also a little afraid of Katze after seeing him strike Riki.

Both crept off, leaving Master and pet to enjoy their intimate moment alone.



RAOUL HAD BEEN AWAKE FOR SOME TIME but continued to lie in bed, staring at Yui, who was still sound asleep, his tousled hair framing his serene face in charming disarray. The gentle youth had stayed with him the entire night, soothing him whenever his pain tormented him, and Raoul had enjoyed his warm touch and the comfort of his presence in his bed. He tried not to think about what had happened at the Taming Tower; he tried so hard that somehow, almost miraculously, his mind began to blur the events, pushing them into the darkest regions of his thoughts where he did not have to deal with them.

He studied Yui, replaying their sexual encounter over and over in his mind, and now desiring to take things a step further. But he wanted to clean up first and so quietly slipped out of bed. He was so aroused that he would have to release in the shower, but then he would be ready to pursue Yui later without feeling rushed.

The water was excruciating on his broken skin—at least at first. But once he became accustomed to it, his erection returned, and he pleased himself eagerly, his thoughts oscillating between Iason and Yui, but more towards Yui, who he fully intended to ravish later that day. Steam rose from the hot water, filling the air. He stood, one hand pressed against the wall for support as he pumped himself without restraint, so aroused that he could no longer keep quiet, moaning and grunting as he ascended towards his critical point.

The fatal image was his penetration of Yui. As he contemplated his plans for the young attendant, his excitement mounted precipitously, suddenly pushing him over the edge. His semen shot up erratically and then oozed onto his fingers as he groaned in

ecstasy, water streaming down his face and body, his hair wet like coils of golden rope plastered to his back.

When Yui finally woke, he realized with dismay his Master had already risen. Jumping up, he rushed back to his room to get cleaned up, and then hurried to the kitchen to prepare breakfast. Raoul's groans caught his attention, and he followed them to the Master shower. As he listened, it became clear that the Blondie was masturbating, the sounds of his sexual excitement all too familiar to the green-eyed youth.

He felt an overwhelming sense of disappointment, wondering why his Master had not taken him after they had slept in the same bed the entire night. Especially after yesterday, when he had, unbelievably, pleased the Blondie. With a feeling of failure, Yui realized then that his performance had most likely been substandard and that his Master would probably never solicit his sex again.

Forcing himself to push aside his own feelings, he rushed to the kitchen to make Raoul a good breakfast, knowing that he would be famished. He hadn't eaten anything the night before, and the Blondie had an enormous appetite. Within minutes he had a feast ready on the table: eggs, bacon, sausage, toast, strawberries, blueberries, coffee and griddle-cakes. Then he continued to make a few more specialties in case his Master wanted them.

"Yui," Raoul called from the table.

Yui dashed out to him, bowing. "I am sorry, Master Raoul. I...overslept."

"Yes. And for that, I'm going to have to whip you publicly," Raoul replied sternly.

A little surprised, Yui braved a glance at his Master and saw from his eyes that he was being teased. It was the first time Raoul had ever played with him. He smiled, a little hesitantly.

"Are you finished in there?"

"I have a few things going, Master."

Raoul nodded, biting into a piece of toast. Yui waited while he chewed and swallowed, admiring his table manners. "When you're finished, come sit with me."

“Sit...at the table with you?” Yui asked, confused.

“Yes. I want to talk to you about something.”

“Of course.” Yui bowed. “Excuse me, Master.”

Raoul gave him a slight nod of dismissal and Yui went back to the kitchen, feeling perplexed. What did his Master want to talk to him about? Raoul had never invited him to sit at his table before. In a daze, he finished up in the kitchen, then brought a tray of sweet rolls and cream-filled krevlians—Raoul’s favorite.

“Ah, krevlians,” Raoul exclaimed, smiling. “Ready to sit down?”

“Yes,” Yui said, nervously.

“Where’s your plate?”

“My...my plate, Master?”

“You’re going to eat, aren’t you?”

“You mean....eat *with* you?” Yui said, somewhat stupidly, but unable to believe his Master was inviting him to eat at the table—almost as if he were his equal.

Raoul nodded, starting in on the krevlians.

Yui rushed back to the kitchen to get a plate and some utensils, and then dashed back, his face lit up so brightly that Raoul could not help but smile. The boy was breathtaking.

“Perfect,” Raoul remarked, referring to the krevlians, although the adjective also described Yui. “Coffee’s good, as well.”

Beaming at his praise, Yui began helping himself to the food, a little tentatively at first, and then with more confidence. They ate in silence for a while.

Raoul leaned back with his coffee. “That was magnificent, as always, Yui.”

“Thank you, Master,” Yui replied, hardly able to contain his joy over his Master’s compliments.

“Now. There’s something we need to discuss,” Raoul announced, setting down his cup. “Keep eating. Just listen.”

Yui nodded, though he felt a little anxious when he saw the Blondie’s serious expression.

“What we did yesterday...and sleeping together last night...no one can ever know about that. Is that *absolutely* clear?”

“Yes, Master.”

"If anyone were to find out, if Jupiter were to find out," Raoul fell silent for a moment, thinking of Iason and Riki. "I think it would just be a matter of time before Jupiter intervened. I'm sure you realize that wouldn't be good for either of us. I'm putting you in danger, Yui, by what I intend to do. After yesterday, I've decided...." The Blondie's voiced trailed off as he gazed steadily at Yui.

The innocent brown-haired youth stared back with wide eyes, heart pounding.

"I've decided that I'm going to *take you*."

These words were almost whispered, Lord Am's eyes betraying his urgency. He then fell silent, as though waiting for Yui's response.

Yui could hardly believe what he was hearing. It was something he had fantasized about for years.

"Master Raoul," he replied, bowing his head, "I will do everything in my power to please you. Please forgive...my inexperience and my significant inadequacies."

Now it was Raoul's turn to feel surprised: at Yui's complete submission to him, at his endearing apology and at the gentle look in his eyes. Suddenly, he didn't want to wait another moment. Rising, he took two steps and was by Yui's side, lifting him up and carrying him to the bedroom, where he pushed him back onto the bed and then slid on top of him.

"Am I crushing you?"

"I don't mind," Yui answered.

The Blondie looked at him for a moment, and then kissed him, slowly, savoring the taste of his mouth, his tongue swirling round and round in an intoxicating lingual dance that sent Yui's head spinning and his heart pounding. He had never been kissed, before Raoul, and he felt a little overwhelmed.

Raoul broke away, kissing his neck and nibbling on his ear.

Yui gasped.

"You like that?" Raoul whispered.

The beautiful youth nodded.

"Now you do it to me." Raoul rolled onto his back, waiting.

"Yes, Master," Yui replied, his words sending a warm surge to the Blondie's loins.

Raoul adored how submissive the boy was, how eager he seemed to please. This suited him perfectly; although he could certainly imagine beating a servant into submission—and *enjoying* it—in his view, it was more satisfying to be catered to and have his every desire met with a single command immediately obeyed. For all his innocent awkwardness, Yui was managing to give Raoul a massive erection as he gently kissed his throat.

The Blondie skimmed his hands down Yui's robe and then lifted it to gain access to his bare bottom. The boy startled a little when he spread him apart. Raoul shivered. He knew Yui would be tight and completely unexplored. It would be exquisite for him, although for the boy it would be an entirely different story, and as he considered this he forced himself to rein in his desire to take Yui hard—not their first time together, at least.

Yui was trembling, which Raoul found endearing. “Are you frightened?” he whispered, running his hand through the eunuch's soft, longish hair.

“A little,” he conceded.

Raoul stroked him for a few minutes, smiling. “I will try to be gentle with you,” he promised. “But I won't lie to you: it will hurt.”

“Y...yes, Master,” Yui stammered.

Moving two fingers up to the boy's mouth, Raoul prodded his lips open. “Suck on my fingers.”

Yui obeyed, a little bewildered, his expression making the Blondie almost laugh. He was delighted with the boy's complete lack of experience. Then, raking his hands down his back and between his legs, Raoul found his entrance and slid a finger inside, moaning when he felt its deliciously tight grip resisting his every move.

Yui gasped, his eyes wide. “Master!”

“Yes?” Raoul whispered, wiggling his finger a little.

“That...that is...is...a *special place*,” he finished anxiously.

“Oh yes. Quite special,” Raoul agreed and then laughed a little. “Do you mean to say, after all the pets you've seen copulating together, you didn't realize where they penetrated?”

“No, Master,” Yui admitted, ashamed. He had absolutely no real understanding of sexuality or even of his own physiology.

"You really are untouched, aren't you?" Raoul winced, now quite painfully aroused. He inserted a second finger into the youth, eliciting another gasp.

"Are you sure that's right?" Yui asked, panicked.

"Are you doubting my sexual knowledge, Yui?" he asked with mock sternness.

"No, Master Raoul," came the lightning fast reply. "Forgive me."

"Good." The Blondie shook a finger in his face. "Otherwise I might have to punish you."

"Pun...punish me?"

"That's right. Naughty attendants who doubt their Masters get spanked." To prove his point, Raoul smacked Yui on his ass, and then began thrusting slowly inside him with his fingers.

"Ah!" Yui yelped, both from the spank and the anal stimulation. "But...are you *sure*...you want to be in there?" He was painfully embarrassed and worried that somehow his Master was quite mistaken, that there was another entrance down there he was overlooking. Besides this, there were *certain things* that he did not want his Master to...perceive.

Raoul answered this with another spank. "Hush now. I'm trying to get you ready."

"Ma...Master?"

"Yes?"

"I don't think that it will fit," Yui whispered anxiously.

A low laugh escaped the Blondie's lips. "I assure you, I will *make* it fit. Now, I'm going to get some oil, and that will help me slide in."

Raoul withdrew his fingers and rolled Yui onto his back, and then got up and retrieved a bottle of sex oil.

"Get undressed," he commanded, as he did the same.

Yui obeyed, gazing up at him with wide eyes, his entire body now shaking. He was excited to be with his Master and yet terrified, feeling as though he wasn't sure what was going to happen next. His eyes moved to Raoul's enormous erection. Surely his Master was mistaken. How could he possibly fit *that* somewhere so small?

Raoul studied Yui's body with interest. The boy was beautifully toned, his skin fair and delicate. He looked for signs of scarring but



found none; his modification had been done exceptionally well. Yet the Blondie could not help but wish he could have seen Yui completely intact—as he would have been, had he not chosen to be his attendant.

“Hold out your hand,” he commanded. When Yui obeyed, he poured some oil into it, raising an eyebrow suggestively.

Yui needed no further instruction, having watched his Master pleasure himself countless times. With confident strokes he lubricated him well.

“Ohhh,” Raoul groaned. “That’s it.”

The stimulation felt so good the Blondie was tempted to spend himself, but the thought of what awaited him proved even more enticing. “All right. Turn over now on your stomach.”

Yui obeyed, a meek, “Yes, Master,” escaping his lips as he did so.

Excited, Raoul gazed down at the boy’s firm, perfectly curved ass, his heart now beating so hard he could hear it in his ears. He got onto the bed, spreading Yui’s legs with his knees. He could feel the boy shaking, which sent another surge of blood to his loins. With trembling fingers, he squeezed the head of his shaft between his cheeks, pressing until he found his entrance.

“Hold still,” the Blondie ordered. “You’re going to feel this part the most.”

With that, he forced himself past the resisting portal, managing to get the tip of his head inside. Yui cried out in agony, staying him.

“It’s in you now, but not very far.”

“It hurts,” Yui whimpered.

“I know. Just tell me when you’re ready.” Raoul closed his eyes, fighting back a dreadfully powerful urge to plunge into the boy.

After a moment, Yui quieted. “Ready, Master.”

Raoul needed no further prompting. He advanced a little further, causing another cry of anguish. He reached down and stroked the eunuch’s hair, wanting to comfort him yet desperately wanting to continue. “Yui,” he said, finally. “I can’t wait any more.”

“Master, do whatever pleases you most,” came the soft reply.

Groaning, Raoul closed his eyes and, taking hold of his hips, began his complete descent into his depths, sliding in quickly to get

it over with. Yui's cries were heartbreaking and he stopped, once fully inside, and just lay on top of him.

"Shhhh," he soothed. "It's all right. I'm inside you now." He continued to stroke Yui's hair as the boy struggled, unsuccessfully, not to cry. "Let it out. Go ahead." Encouraged by his Master's gentle words and touch, the eunuch sobbed out his pain.

After a few moments, the discomfort dissipated, and Yui quieted again, sniffing.

Raoul, who had been waiting patiently for Yui to adjust to him, was now itching to begin his conquest. Slowly, he began thrusting, and while the boy gasped and winced, he sensed that he was loosening up—although from the Blondie's perspective he had never felt anything so tight as Yui's reluctant embrace, not even Riki. The boy gripped him beautifully, exquisitely—mercilessly.

Moaning, he now began taking the virgin youth in earnest, each thrust a little harder than the one before.

Yui had stopped crying out and was now gasping, confused. What his Master was doing felt *good*. "Ohhh," he moaned quietly.

Raoul heard him clearly. "You like this now, do you?" The Blondie began plunging into the boy, his own needs taking over.

"Uhhm," Yui grunted, excited. "I like it, Master!"

"Jupiter help me," the Blondie gasped, and then moaned. "Oh, Yui...you're so tight. I can't...I can't wait any longer!"

He vocalized his release loudly as he reached his peak, ejaculating hard and with such intensity he squeezed his eyes shut, feeling as though he would burst from the pleasure. Then he fell forward onto Yui's back, panting.

Beneath him, Yui was smiling, savoring the intimate moment he had just shared with his Blondie Master.

"Sweet mother of Amoi," Raoul groaned, feeling as though he had to shake himself back to his senses. He rolled onto his back, pulling Yui close. He felt as though he wanted to say something, but words eluded him, so he simply held the boy in his arms.



IASON PULLED ON HIS GLOVES, turning to Katze. "I have a few matters that need attending. I'm leaving you in charge." He removed the taming belt and sheath, handing them to the eunuch. "Don't hesitate to use the stick if necessary."

"No problem." Katze put on the belt, fastening it tight, the taming stick brushing against his outer thigh. "Iason, about Enyu."

"Yes?"

"He said something earlier this morning. It was a little vague, but he seemed to be saying that Jupiter told him you were a deviant."

Iason considered this for a moment. "Impossible. Jupiter doesn't talk to pets."

"Don't you find it odd, though, that Enyu was sent from Jupiter?"

The Blondie did find it odd, for many reasons, and had been puzzling over the gift since he acquired Enyu at the Dark Horse. He nodded. "I'm watching him."

"Another thing. This morning I did some research on Xeronians. This interval that's almost upon us—this is a powerful thing. When he ruts, he emits pheromones, but at a hundred times the Amoian levels. Right now he's all obedience, but then he'll be an animal. He'll have to be chained up for the duration. But you—and Riki—will both be drawn to him. I just thought you should know."

"I thought as much," Iason replied. "That explains a few things. I think we'll wait until after his interval to take him to the tailor."

"That might be wise," Katze agreed. "He seems a little...excited."

"Oh—Katze. One more thing. I want more Accelerator applied to Riki's wounds. Use the entire contents of a standard unit."

"Sure thing."

"He won't like it," Iason warned. "You'll have to tie him down."

"I will if I need to."

"Also, please contact Xian Sami and let him know I'd like to have Juthian as soon as he's ready to part with him. I want to start training him right away. He knows Daryl, so if Xian asks about him, say that he is in the hospital with an infection. Try not to give any additional information."

Katze nodded.

"You'll be training him, Katze. He's going to be replacing Daryl."

This was news to Katze, who hadn't spoken to Daryl—except briefly before he went to the hospital—since Iason had informed Daryl of his decision.

“What...what's going to happen to Daryl?” he asked, alarmed.

“I've decided his skills would be better utilized elsewhere. I have several projects in mind,” he answered evasively.

“Then, he'll not be your attendant anymore?”

“Once Juthian's trained, no. Just as it was with you. I'll find him a place in the city, unless you care to let him room with you.”

Heart pounding, Katze stared at the Blondie in disbelief. It was as though he had just received an extraordinary gift, and at first he was speechless.

“I take it that plan meets with your approval?” the Blondie remarked, arching a single brow.

“Yes,” Katze answered, feeling his eyes sting with tears.

“Don't think I've forgotten our unfinished business, Katze. However, I've decided to suspend Daryl's punishment because of his commendable conduct in trying to defend Riki. I think the injuries he sustained are punishment enough. But you and I have this...*issue* between us that needs resolving.”

“Punish me tonight,” Katze pleaded.

“Why so eager?”

“Because I don't want Daryl to watch me suffer.”

The Blondie hesitated; he had wanted that to be part of the punishment, but given Daryl's condition, he decided to grant Katze his wish.

“Very well.”

“Iason. May I...visit Daryl first?”

“You may, after I return.”

“Thank you.”

“You won't be thanking me tonight. I'm afraid, given your infraction, your punishment must be severe.”

“I know.”

“I'm going to be whipping you, Katze.”

The handsome redhead swallowed hard at this revelation, nodding solemnly. This wasn't the first time he would feel Iason's

arm, but it was his first whipping, and he knew it would take him to the very brink of hell. But at least Daryl was to be spared; and soon Daryl would be in his arms, in his bed—in their shared apartment.

“I’ll be home in a few hours,” Iason added, departing without further comment.

Katze went out to the balcony, fingers shaking as he tried to light a smoke. He called the hospital once again with his handheld, much to the head nurse’s annoyance: Katze had been calling every hour to check on Daryl’s condition. Informed rather curtly that he was stable and that nothing had changed, Katze let the phone and his smoke drop to the ground, burying his face in his hands.

Suddenly it was as if something inside him broke. He tried to stop the tears but couldn’t. It wasn’t like him to cry, but when it came to Daryl, he hardly knew himself anymore. He loved the kid so much it hurt. Now he was crying tears of worry as well as tears of joy. He couldn’t believe Daryl was going to be released from his attendant duties, that soon they would be living together like normal lovers. And now he cried a little for himself, too...afraid of the night that was ahead.



RIKI REMAINED IN HIS ROOM FOR HOURS, pants off, feeling as though his ass was on fire. His earlier pairing with Enyu was now exceedingly puzzling to him, almost as though he had been acting in a dream. He got some satisfaction knowing he had made cat-boy whimper; the memory of Enyu’s yelps made him giggle. But he was still pissed at Iason about the room situation and he wasn’t about to let the matter drop.

“You really got your ass whipped this time.” Katze stood in the doorway, leaning against the doorframe, arms crossed on his chest.

Riki’s eyes were immediately drawn to the taming stick and belt that he wore. “What! Did Iason give you that?”

Katze smiled, patting the taming stick. “Yep. In case you need your ass tamed again.”

“Hey! That slap fucking hurt, by the way,” Riki grumbled. “I bet you got off, you pervert.”

“I’ll get off even more taming you with *this*,” Katze replied, caressing the sheathed stick. “So you’d better behave, or I’ll be more than happy to make you howl.”

“Dickhead. Don’t get all puffed up on your little power trip. Did you come here just to show me that?”

“I’ve come here for one purpose, Riki. And you’re not going to like it.”

Katze revealed what he had been holding in one hand: silk ties. Riki stared at him, the perplexed look on his face making the eunuch laugh. “Don’t get too excited. I’m tying you up, but not for the reason you’ve always dreamed of.”

“Why the hell are you tying me up?” Riki demanded, ignoring Katze’s joke.

Katze pulled the unmistakable thin aerosol can from his pocket—Accelerator, shaking it slightly.

“No bloody way!” Riki cried, jumping up.

Katze immediately whipped the taming stick out and held it up threateningly. “Lie back down, Riki.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Care to try me on that?” The eunuch tapped the stick in his hand suggestively, his eyes glimmering.

“Come on, Katze! That stuff stings like hell,” Riki protested.

“Iason’s orders.”

“Can’t you just spray it in the air and then tell him you did it?”

“Dumbass. He’d be able to tell when you didn’t heal fast.”

“Please, Katze,” the mongrel begged.

“Sorry, Riki.” Katze pushed him back onto the bed and tied his wrists to the bedposts.

“Fucking Iason,” Riki muttered, irritated.

“He was worried sick about you, you know, when you disappeared. I’ve never seen him like that.”

“Oh yeah?” Riki perked up a little at this.

“I could have sworn I saw him cry.”

“I thought Blondies never cried.”

“So did I.”

Riki smiled, but his expression quickly changed when he felt the eunuch straddle his legs and then begin spraying the Accelerator. He screamed, struggling futilely against his restraints.

“Almost finished,” Katze announced, pausing to push up Riki’s shirt a bit more.

“I’m gonna kill you when you’re done! I’ll stick that spray-can up your ass!”

“Ooo don’t tease me. I bet you say that to all the boys.”

“Dammit, Katze, I’m not fucking kidding! You have no idea how much this hurts.”

“No...but I’m about to find out. Iason’s punishing me tonight.”

“Tonight?”

“Yep. And I don’t want scars...*more* scars, that is. So I want you to do this for me tonight.”

“Scars? Katze, it’s not like he’s going to whip you.”

“Actually, yes. It’s a whipping.”

“Bloody hell,” Riki whispered. He remembered well the public whipping of the unfortunate nameless pet with the nice ass. “Iason can really be a total dick sometimes.”

“Yep. Only don’t you *dare* tell him I agreed with you.”

“Damn. Shit! This is my fault...isn’t this for Serendipity?”

“It’s not your fault. Well...I guess *technically*, yeah, it is.”

“You know you wanted it,” Riki shot back, grinning.

“Details, details. So will you do the same for me tonight?”

“What, blow you? I would if you had one for me to suck.”

Katze shook his head. “Go ahead. Just rub my face in it.”

There was a time when Riki’s insensitive jibe would have really stung, but now he took such taunts in stride.

“For that little remark, I ought to use this opportunity to give you the taming you really deserve.”

“You wouldn’t dare.”

“Wouldn’t I?” Katze slid the taming stick from the sheath and slapped it against his hand. “Ohhh...this is so tempting. You’re tied up and everything.”

“Use that thing on me and I’ll knock your bleeding lights out!”

“Oh, I’d like to see you try. You think you could take me on? After I slapped you, I thought you might cry.”

“Hey! That *did* hurt, by the way. What the hell was that about?”

“You should know by now, Riki. When Iason is watching, you obey without question. Don’t expect special treatment from me because we’re friends. In Iason’s presence, his word is absolute.”

“Fucking Jupiter. You sound like Daryl now.”

Katze smiled. “I’ll do whatever he commands and I strongly advise *you* to do the same. If he tells me to ram this stick up your ass, that’s where it’s going.”

“It’s already been there, thanks.”

“What?” Katze laughed.

“I was trying to...oh fuck. Never mind.”

The eunuch laughed so hard that tears formed in his eyes. “You were trying to do *what*, you little pervert? Holy shit. The things you come up with.”

“Yeah, well.”

Katze slid the stick back into its sheath. “So, will you apply Accelerator for me tonight?”

“Yeah, but that stuff on lash marks is gonna sting something wicked. It’ll be like being punished again.”

“I can take it. And so can you: here’s the rest of this.”

As Katze sprayed the remaining Accelerator on Riki’s back, the mongrel’s screams once again filled the penthouse, drawing Enyu’s attention. Enyu had been at the very brink of orgasm during the first set of screams and so had not been at liberty to explore what was going on.

Now he left his room, quietly padding down the hall to Riki’s room, where he peeked in to see what was happening.

Riki was tied to the bed, howling his misery. Katze straddled him, spraying something on his back that was apparently the source of the mongrel’s consternation. The eunuch continued his spraying project until the can was empty, and then got up and untied his unhappy patient.

At that moment Riki finally noticed Enyu. “What the fuck? Get out of here, you feline freak!”



"I'm not in your room. Technically I'm in the hall, which you don't own. And you didn't close the door, so?"

Riki then changed his strategy. "You sure make a fuss when you're getting fucked, cat-boy," he taunted, eyes gleaming. "I'm a little worried you didn't enjoy it."

"Who could enjoy it with a *mongrel*?" Enyu retorted, having picked up that the term "mongrel" was an insult, even though he wasn't exactly sure why.

"If I had *wanted* you to enjoy it, you would have been purring," Riki replied. "But that was hardly my objective."

"You just wait until Master Iason has me take *you*."

Riki laughed. "Dream on, pussycat. It's not happening."

Enyu smiled mysteriously. "We'll see. Those bruises are quite impressive, Riki. You must be very proud Master Iason loves you so much to leave such tokens of his regard."

"You fucking little—" Riki leapt from the bed and charged after Enyu, who immediately took off running down the hall.

Both pets went dashing through the penthouse, Riki still wearing only his shirt. As they passed Iason's favorite chair, one of them knocked over the end table, sending a lamp crashing to the floor.

"Riki! Enyu! Stop this instant!" Katze bellowed, chasing them into the great hall.

The pets ignored him and began running around the dining table.

Katze whipped out his taming stick and slammed it down on the table with a loud whack. Enyu and Riki both stopped, staring at him with surprise.

"That's it. Three strikes each. Riki, you're first. Put your palms on the table."

"Oh, come on, Katze," Riki protested. "You can't be serious."

"I most certainly am serious. *Now*, Riki."

Hesitating, Riki slowly obeyed, placing his palms on the table. He was sure that Katze only meant to give him a little tap. When Katze unleashed a stinging blow to his already sore thighs, he yelped with pain and surprise. The second and third strikes were equally hard, and he struggled to blink back tears.

"Enyu, you're next. Palms on the table."

Enyu stood, frozen, staring at Katze in disbelief. He had never heard of an attendant that had the authority to discipline pets. Surely he really wasn't going to strike him with that stick?

"Did you hear me? Palms on the table, *now*."

But Enyu continued to stand, his fear now evident in his eyes. Riki watched him with pleasure. Cat-boy was wiggling out.

"That's six strikes for you now, Enyu. Want more? Just keep standing there and I'll keep adding them."

Enyu moved forward, slowly, and placed his palms on the table.

"Riki, raise his garment for me."

Delighted with his assignment, the mongrel pulled up Enyu's gown to reveal his bare bottom, and held it there.

Katze repositioned himself and then, with a mighty swing, delivered the first blow to Enyu's upper thighs.

The Xeronian cried out in agony. He had never been disciplined before, and it was much worse than he could have imagined. He was now terrified of Katze, deeply regretting his earlier attitude toward him. Clearly, he had gravely underestimated the eunuch's power and importance. It was obvious to him now that this particular attendant enjoyed special status with Master Iason.

The second and third strikes were equally brutal, landing on his ass. Enyu howled and then bit his lip to keep from crying, opening his eyes wide, but then came the fourth, and the fifth, and finally, the sixth strike.

It was too much. He began sobbing, not even caring that Riki was exulting in his humiliation.

Riki was, indeed, gloating over his misery but wisely kept quiet.

"Both of you go to your rooms until Master Iason comes home," Katze commanded sternly.

The mongrel punched Katze in the arm as he left the great hall. "Thanks a lot, asshole."

Katze smiled, returning the taming stick to its sheath. Next he went to Iason's command center and put in a visual to Xian Sami.

Xian's most striking feature was his unusual eyes. He was the only Blondie that did not have blue or green eyes—his were golden, flecked with amber. It was a deviation that had perplexed Jupiter,

one of a series of unexpected mutations that had mysteriously appeared in the genetic pool.

The great Blondie answered, intoxicatingly virile as usual, his gaze smolderingly intense. As always, he wore a long braid in his hair that hung down beside his face, bound with leather metal-tipped tassels in the style of the ancient Urasian warriors.

"Katze. My regards to your Master."

"Thank you, Lord Sami. And he gives his regards to you. He wanted me to contact you regarding Juthian. He would like the boy as soon as you are prepared to let him go."

"Certainly. He has just been through modification today. With acceleration he should be ready in two days. I'll have him sent...no—I'll bring him by personally, the day after tomorrow."

"Perfect."

"This is much sooner than he originally planned," Lord Sami commented, fishing for information.

"Yes. Master Iason hopes you will forgive his eagerness to have Juthian here so soon, but Daryl is in the hospital with an infection, so he would like to begin training Juthian right away."

"Are you back at the penthouse now, Katze?"

"Yes, Sir. Temporarily."

"So then you'll be doing the training?"

"Yes," Katze answered, wanting to bring the conversation to a close before the Blondie thought of something else to ask. "I'll let Master Iason know that he can expect you in two days."

"Of course."

"Thank you, Lord Sami."

Xian nodded, cutting off the transmission. The Blondie stared at the screen for a moment, wondering what was really happening at the penthouse.

One of his gifts was his ability to ferret out the truth. Katze had lied to him about the infection. Most likely Iason had disciplined Daryl a little too enthusiastically, but perhaps something else was going on. He was a little disappointed that Juthian would be leaving so soon; already Lord Sami regretted his hasty decision to give Juthian up.

Juthian had been terrified when Xian informed him he was destined to serve Iason Mink and attend the Blondie's infamous mongrel pet. Although he was somewhat flattered at being chosen by the powerful Blondie, Juthian was far too intimidated by him to feel much more than fear.

And learning that he was to become an attendant had been devastating. His whole existence had been based on his sexuality, and for that to be taken away was unthinkable. Yet, it was better than life in a brothel—his Master had threatened to put him to work at the Dark Horse. Much as he enjoyed sex, Juthian couldn't bear the thought of brothel life. He'd heard stories that made his stomach turn. At least at Iason's penthouse he would continue to live in luxury, although it would be difficult to learn how to serve rather than be served. He was resigned to accept what his Master had chosen for him, however, his public whipping having dispelled all urges toward disobedience.

The blank screen signaled the end of the connection. Katze left the command station and was heading toward Daryl's room, when the door buzzed.

The eunuch pressed the intercom. "Yes?"

"Delivery for Lord Kink. From Lord Ghan," came the tiny voice.

Katze smiled. Lord *Kink*? "Do you mean Lord *Mink*?"

"Um...yeah."

"Put your hand on the scanner, please."

The boy obeyed, his signature identifying him as Omaki's *pet*, Aki, although he was not registered.

Katze opened the door then and accepted the large box from Aki, who seemed unusually young to be a pet, especially to be delivering something for his Master. Only older pets attended to such tasks, and only for the sole purpose of being shown off a bit.

"Who drove you here?"

"Master Omaki," the boy answered sweetly, eyes wide.

Katze frowned. Aki was young—far *too* young to be a pet, in his opinion. Omaki Ghan was a total pervert.

"So how do you like living in the Taming Tower?" Katze asked.

"It's fun," Aki replied eagerly. "Master built me a slide that goes all the way from the top down to the bottom, round and round!"

"I see."

Katze narrowed his eyes, wondering what other things Omaki had for his pretty little pet to play with. Surely Jupiter would not allow such deviance. Besides, Aki was clearly not from the Pet Academy. He looked to be a normal youngster, probably some orphan from Midas. Katze would make a point to bring it up with Iason, feeling an instinctive urge to look out for the innocent-looking boy.

"What's your name again?"

"Aki."

"Can you find your way back down by yourself, Aki?"

"Yeah," he murmured uncertainly.

"Turn that way," Katze pointed, "see the elevator there?"

"Oh yeah." The boy smiled at him, his face breathtakingly beautiful. "Bye!"

"See you," Katze answered, blinking.

It was clear enough why Omaki had picked out the boy for his pet. Aki was already stunning, even as a child. His good looks were only bound to increase as he matured.

Katze brought the box into the penthouse and set it on the bar counter, wondering what was in it. He shook his head; coming from Omaki Ghan, he could only imagine.



RAOUL AND YUI REMAINED TOGETHER the entire night. The Blondie was comforted by the presence of the submissive youth so eager to please him, catering to his every wish.

They drifted in and out of sleep, each marveling over what had transpired that night whenever they slid into awareness. Yui snuggled back against Raoul's warm naked body, and the Blondie instinctively pulled him closer.

"You were *perfect*," he whispered into his ear, finally.

Smiling, Yui answered by stroking Raoul's arms, which were wrapped tightly around him. He had never felt happier in his life. All of his fantasies and longings had led up to that very moment, and even though he could feel the Blondie's warmth pressed against him, he could not believe it was real.

Master Raoul had *taken* him.

Lord Am was similarly astonished at what had just transpired. He could not believe that he had engaged in coitus with Yui, nor could he understand his own emotions concerning that event.

It was more than just sexual enjoyment. He felt calmed by the boy's mere presence. Though he was still hurting from Iason's retribution—mostly in his heart—he found that Yui had significantly lessened his pain. It was almost as though his obsession with Iason had been broken, just as his body had been broken, and all his longings had inexplicably transferred to Yui.

"Did you enjoy it?" he asked, gently.

"Oh! Yes...that is, mostly. I enjoyed giving you pleasure."

Raoul laughed softly. "Was I very hard on you?"

"A little," Yui admitted. "You have a huge organ."

"And you are exquisitely *tight*." The Blondie growled, biting Yui's neck and eliciting a gasp from the eunuch.

Lord Am shivered. He wanted to take the youth again but knew he needed time to heal.

Yui felt the stirring of his Master's organ against his thighs and instinctively sucked in his breath.

"Yui," Raoul breathed, now passionately kissing and nibbling his neck and shoulder.

"Are you ready again, Master?"

"I am." He took hold of Yui's hand and brought it to his developing erection. Yui fondled him sweetly with inexperienced but eager fingers, bringing him quickly to full arousal.

Raoul lay back on the bed. "Pleasure me with your mouth," he commanded, his voice thick with lust.

"Yes, Master." Yui slid down between the Blondie's legs, pausing for a moment to examine his growing erection.

Raoul watched him, amused. "Haven't you seen one before?"

“Of course not, Master,” Yui replied, giving him a perplexed look. “I mean, not this close. Are they all so big?”

Raoul laughed—a loud, deep laugh, a laugh that he had not made for many years. “You are so delightfully naive.”

He reached down and stroked Yui’s cheek. “Now...press your lips up against the tip,” he instructed, his voice lowering with some urgency, “and now, let me feel your tongue, just a little.” He closed his eyes when Yui complied. “Yes. Just like that—good boy. Open your mouth more and take me in a bit.”

Yui obeyed Raoul’s every command, thrilled to be pleasuring his Master yet again. The Blondie ran his hands through his hair, a sigh escaping his lips as Yui took him in deeper. The sight of the beautiful youth servicing him was so erotic that Raoul began his ascent far earlier than he would have anticipated.

“Ah yes,” he moaned. “Perfect, Yui. Just like *that*. Sweet mother!”

Clenching his teeth, the Blondie spent himself inside Yui’s warm mouth, delighting when he swallowed him without being told.

“Yes. Yes,” he murmured urgently, holding the boy’s head between his hands.

His eyes rolled back as the final spasms of pleasure transported him to another realm, a place where all of Amoi was swept away and only he and Yui remained.

As he drifted back into awareness, he once again reflected that they were both engaging in an extraordinarily dangerous activity. If Jupiter were to discover them, the consequences would be severe. Yui would most certainly be shipped to the border planets.

And as for Raoul, his mind would probably be tampered with, the very thing he had warned Iason about countless times. If anyone knew about such matters, it was Raoul, for neurological modifications fell within the realm of his own responsibilities. It was Raoul’s duty to detain any deviants, at Jupiter’s bidding, and transport them to Heiku Quiahtenon at Tanagura Medical for neurological intervention. Such changes were permanent and completely transforming.

His thoughts gravitated to Yousi, who had *once* been a Blondie of enormous stature and intelligence. Now, in terms of cognition,

Yousi was severely limited. He had been modified for seditious insubordination, after claiming that Jupiter could be brought down—an absurd claim, of course, but one that Jupiter had not taken lightly.

“Was that...satisfactory?” Yui asked nervously, puzzling over the serious look in his Master’s eyes.

“Most definitely.” With a smile, Raoul pulled Yui up and then held him in his arms, eyes closed, for a long moment. “Yui,” he said, finally. “We...must be very careful.”

“Yes, Master.”

“You must tell no one.”

“I would not do such a foolish thing, Master.”

“Do you understand what would happen if Jupiter were to discover us?”

“Yes.” Yui was quiet for a moment. “But, Master Raoul, surely Jupiter knows that Lord Mink takes his pet, the mongrel Riki?”

Raoul froze. “What makes you think Iason takes his pet?”

Surprised, Yui shook his head. “Everyone knows that. You must know that, Master. It is not news.”

Sighing, Raoul closed his eyes, bringing a hand to his head and covering his eyes. “To be honest, I don’t know, Yui. But Jupiter regards Iason differently than the rest of us. Perhaps she gives him some license to bend her rules. But we can’t expect the same leniency. Jupiter has no particular interest in me.”

For a long time, Raoul and Yui remained thus, each reflecting on the situation they were in.



UPON HIS RETURN TO THE PENTHOUSE, Iason immediately noticed the box sitting on the bar counter but chose to ignore it, recognizing Omaki’s seal.

“Wine, Iason?” Katze asked, immediately moving behind the bar.

“Yes. Icarian Amber. So, were my pets obedient while I was out?”

“I’m afraid not.”



"Is that so?" Iason smiled. "Riki?"

"Both of them."

"And how did Enyu take it?"

"Pretty hard. He's a little soft, that one. I don't think he's ever been disciplined before."

"What did they do?"

"Ran through the penthouse and broke a lamp."

Iason nodded. He could just picture it. "Did you contact Xian?"

Katze handed him his wine. "Yes. He says Juthian will be ready the day after tomorrow. He'll bring him. And I applied Accelerator to Riki, like you asked."

"Did you have to tie him down?"

"Yes. He was rather reluctant."

"I have no doubt." The Blondie suppressed a smile as he settled down in his favorite chair, crossing his legs with a weary sigh.

Katze shifted his weight anxiously. "May I go to the hospital now?"

"You may. Be back by nine."

"Thank you, Iason," Katze murmured, giving him a little bow and immediately heading for the door.

Once outside the penthouse, he practically ran to the elevator, cursing its slow descent to the ground level. He sprinted to his roadhugger, fortunately parked nearby in reserved parking next to Iason's sleek hovercraft prowler. With trembling fingers he punched in his codes and then, backing up with a squeal, took off for Tanagura Medical, offending a series of outraged drivers on the way. At the hospital he parked illegally, but with Iason's ID tags, he knew no one would dare move him.

He rushed inside and made for Daryl's room, ignoring the head nurse as he dashed past her station.

Daryl was awake and, upon seeing him, gifted him with the sweetest smile Katze had ever seen in his life.

"Hey love," he said softly, approaching him slowly.

"Hey."

"Are you in pain?"

"A little. I'm glad you're here. That one nurse is scary."

Katze laughed. "You mean the one with the blue hair and the stick up her ass?"

"Yeah. That one."

The blue-haired lady was now at the door, one hand on her hip. "This is a hospital, young man. You cannot come running in here like it's some kind of circus."

"My apologies. Lord Mink is anxious to know how his attendant is doing."

"Humph," she sniffed, unimpressed with the mention of Iason Mink, but smart enough to know not to insult Tanagura Medical's greatest benefactor. She turned on her heel and left in a huff.

Daryl giggled. "You can't run in here like it's some kind of *circus*? Since when do people run at a circus?"

Katze smiled, thrilled to see his lover in good spirits. "Maybe they do when the big cats escape."

He curled up his hands as though getting ready to scratch him, hissing like an angry cat, and then bent down and kissed him gently on the lips. Daryl returned his kiss, tongue flicking sensually in his mouth, and for some moments they loved one another thus, savoring their hard-earned reunion.

"Oh love...I've been worried sick about you," Katze moaned. "I've been going out of my mind."

"I've missed you so much, Katze."

"Hey, boyfriend." Katze pushed on his nose as though it were a button. "We're going to be living together soon."

Daryl grinned. "I know. I can't believe it."

Katze shook his head. "Me either. Though I can see why Iason's doing it. You're fucking brilliant with computers."

"He says I have to train his new attendant first."

"I'm going to be starting that. It's Juthian, Xian Sami's pet."

"The one that got whipped? He's going to be modified?"

"Already happened. Today, in fact. He'll be at the penthouse the day after tomorrow."

"And you're training him?"

"Yeah. Iason had me come and take over your duties. I've been sleeping in your bed," he added, smiling.

“Really?”

“Guess what else. Jupiter gave Iason a new pet—a Xeronian.”

“Seriously? What about Riki?”

“Iason appears to be keeping them both. You know he’d never give up Riki.” He shook his head. “You should see the two of them. They’re at each other like two brothers.”

“I bet,” Daryl smiled.

“I even had to punish them today.” Katze grinned, raising a brow. “With a taming stick.”

“What! Iason never let me do that!”

“It was sexy as hell. Oh! And Iason had them pair. I got to see the whole thing.”

“I’m missing everything fun!” Daryl lamented.

“Then you’d better hurry up and get better. That’s an order.”

“Oh yeah? What will you do if I *don’t*?”

Katze leaned close to him, expressionless. “Spank you. In fact, I think I’ll do that even if you get better, just for putting me through all this.”

“No matter what I do I’ll get spanked!” Daryl protested.

“Stop fussing. You know you want it.”

“Yeah. I do,” Daryl confessed, and then lowered his voice. “I want to be in your arms again.”

“All right then,” Katze replied, climbing up onto his bed and snuggling up to him.

“Katze!” Daryl giggled. “That blue-haired lady will come.”

“Let her come. I can take her on, the old bat.”

For quite a while the two lovers lay together, snuggling and catching up on weeks of missed time and the events of the past few days. Katze opted not to tell Daryl about what was waiting for him when he returned to the penthouse, not wanting anything to worry him as he made his recovery. As the hour drew close to nine, he simply stated that Iason wanted him back early.

“I’m sure he does,” Daryl laughed. “Riki is enough of a handful.”

“Yeah, and Enyu’s reaching his rutting period, so it should be rather interesting.”

“Xeronian, wow. I’ve heard they’re beautiful.”

“You should see his eyes. Riki calls him cat-boy.”

“Are you attracted to him?”

“No, silly. I’ve got what I want right here.” Katze leaned down and kissed him. “And don’t you forget it. Now, turn over onto your stomach, if you can.”

“Why?”

“Obey me!”

Giggling, Daryl did so, yelping when Katze began spanking him, just a few playfully hard spansks for fun.

“There. You deserved that, naughty boy.”

“What for?”

“Just because I said so. So you’ll learn to mind me. You can roll back over now.”

Daryl rolled onto his back, smiling up at his lover with shining eyes. “I love you, Katze.”

“Daryl...I love you, too, but those three words can’t possibly express what I feel for you,” he whispered. He kissed him then, a long, unhurried kiss, his heart feeling as though it were ready to burst. He was so relieved that Daryl seemed to be doing well. After a long night of worrying, Katze finally felt that everything would be all right. Daryl would be fine. And soon, unbelievably, they would be living together in Katze’s apartment.

It all seemed too good to be true.

# 5

## Punishing Katze

“JUTHIAN.”

The sound of his Master’s voice drifted into his consciousness and, struggling against the pain, Juthian opened his eyes.

The Blondie was staring down at him. He was drinking a cognac, as usual, seeming rather impassive about his pet’s state. What Juthian did not know was that he had been standing there watching him for nearly an hour.

Xian lifted the bed sheet that covered him; there was nothing to see but a bandage, but even that revealed that his pet was no longer fully male. Instead, his pelvic region was flat, sunken between his hipbones. Lord Sami let the sheet fall.

Juthian did not need to ask if it was over—the aching pain in his groin told him he had indeed been castrated. In his last moments before falling unconscious, he had fantasized that his modification just a ploy on his Master’s part to frighten him, another one of his punishments, and that he would still be Lord Sami’s pet. But now he knew it was true. What hurt even more than his physical pain was the knowledge that his Master did not want him anymore.

“Are you in pain?” Xian asked, and then, without waiting for his response, he called out to the medical attendant for an analgesic. The youth rushed over and administered an opiate intravenously. Juthian felt it almost immediately, sighing his relief.

“Your new Master, Iason Mink, wants you soon. You’ll be going the day after tomorrow.”

Juthian nodded bravely. He was going to miss his Master tremendously. He had always enjoyed performing for him and

watching the Blondie pleasure himself. He had loved brushing out his hair each day and putting in his long, slender braid, which Lord Sami had insisted that only he—and not an attendant—do.

Stupidly, Juthian had believed that his Master felt something for him. Lord Sami had always pampered him with every sort of luxury. He was always bringing him gifts and wanting him to sit on his lap while he opened them. Juthian had, perhaps, mistaken his Master's lust for some sort of affection. He had done everything in his power to please the Blondie—at least until he had opened the Forbidden Chest.

Juthian still could not believe how much this had angered his Master, how, in that instant, everything between them was simply swept away. In his heart Juthian felt he had been treated a little unfairly, that what he had done was not a transgression worthy of a public whipping and complete rejection by his Master. Yes, he felt a little angry with his Master. But mostly *hurt*.

But then, Juthian was only a pet. He had no right to question his Blondie Master's prohibitions or decisions. One thing was certain: he would be more careful with his new Master.

Xian seemed to hesitate for a moment, as though he wanted to say something. He took another sip of his cognac, gazing down at the boy. His golden-amber eyes, as always, filled Juthian with a sense of awe. No one on Amoi had eyes like Xian Sami. They were beautiful, sensual, and almost magical, nearly the same color as the cognac the Blondie always drank, though even more rich and golden in hue.

"You should be prepared," Xian whispered. "Your new Master may...want certain things."

Juthian felt like laughing. Did his Master honestly think he didn't know about Iason and his famous mongrel pet? Everyone knew Iason Mink took Riki. But even Lord Mink wouldn't be sexually interested in a scarred attendant. No one would.

"I will obey my Master in all things," he replied weakly.

Xian made a strange face, one that Juthian could not read.

"You should be quite flattered," the Blondie remarked. "Iason Mink asked specifically for you. You will have a very comfortable life in his penthouse."

“Yes, Master.” Juthian waited, wondering why his Master seemed to dally.

“Ju. I would like to...kiss you. Think of it as a goodbye kiss.”

Juthian’s heart began to pound. Though Xian had kissed him many times on the cheek or forehead, he had a distinct feeling this was not the kind of kiss his Master wanted now.

Perceiving his silence as acquiescence, Xian set his drink down and leaned over the bed, gently brushing Juthian’s lips with his own. Kissing him a little harder, the Blondie slid his tongue tentatively into his mouth, and then began exploring him slowly, prodding his mouth open wider. His passion increasing, Lord Sami then kissed him hungrily, thrilled when Juthian responded.

For a long, long time they kissed, expressing in that moment all the pent-up, forbidden desires each had secretly harbored for the other and realizing—too late—what might have been, if they had only dared.

The Blondie wished that he had not been so hard on his pet, that he had not threatened to transfer him to the Dark Horse or sell him to an open club. Had he not publicly announced that he planned to sell Juthian, he would never have garnered the interest of Iason Mink. Xian couldn’t refuse Iason, and he was proud that the Blondie wanted Juthian, but he didn’t want to part with him. He wished he could keep his Ju the way Iason kept Riki.

It was their first kiss, a kiss that was exceptionally erotic, sweet and sad—for it was also their last.



“RIKI! ENYU!” THE BLONDIE’S UNMISTAKABLE BELLOW sent both pets rushing to the great hall. Iason sat in his favorite chair by the fireplace, his legs comfortably crossed, and a wine glass in his gloved hand.

“I understand that Katze was forced to discipline the two of you this afternoon,” he remarked, sipping his wine. “That’s most unfortunate. For his trouble, I’m going to give you both a few swats.

Perhaps in the future you will think twice before acting like wild boys when I'm away."

The mongrel was rather put out with this announcement. After all, he'd already endured two spankings and a few strikes with the taming stick—and this was but a day after his punishment at Raoul's hand. Even just "a few swats" sounded unpleasant, and Riki had no desire to undergo further acceleration on top of it.

"But, um, *Master* Iason," he whispered imploringly, "I've already been punished *three times* today. Can't I have mine tomorrow?"

"No, pet. This will be a lesson for you. If Katze is forced to use that taming stick when I'm away, you'll be getting another round of discipline from me when I get home. Come here." Iason set his wine glass down, patting his lap.

Reluctantly, Riki shuffled forward. Iason seized him and turned him over his knee, tugging down his pants.

"Yow!" Riki complained, wincing.

"You're never going to heal if I keep disciplining you, pet."

"Then stop disciplining me! Um...*Master*."

"Stop misbehaving. Quit acting like a child."

"But I—Master, can I, um...please stop calling you Master for like, five minutes? It's impeaching my ability to communicate. And I need to tell you something. *Important*."

Iason's lips twitched as he struggled to suppress a smile. "Do you mean it's *impeding* your ability to communicate?"

"Yes! That's what I mean. Impede! Master."

"Very well. What is it you want to tell me that's so important?" Iason pulled off his gloves and set them on the arm of his chair, resting a hand on the mongrel's bared ass.

"I can't help myself," Riki moaned. "I mean I can't help how I'm acting. I don't know why. I feel funny. Ever since I got up this morning. Like I can't...completely control what I'm doing."

Iason considered this for a moment. Any other time he would have disregarded the mongrel's claim, but Riki had just undergone a massive dose of molecular acceleration, which was known to sometimes produce bizarre effects on behavior. Paradoxically, acceleration could make the recipient act and even look *younger*, at



least temporarily, which was why some Elites underwent regular acceleration treatments to maintain a youthful appearance.

Riki, perceiving Iason's silence as an encouraging sign, now began to plead. "Come on, please? After all I've been through? Can't you give me a break, considering? I'll be good. I'll really try. Honest. I *swear* it. My word's good, when I give my oath—ask anyone in Ceres."

Iason sighed, and then stood the mongrel back on his feet. "I'll be lenient, just this once," he announced, giving him a stern look. "But don't make me regret it."

A bit surprised that the Blondie had capitulated, Riki only nodded, tugging up his pants with relief. It was the first time he could ever remember Iason letting him off when punishment was imminent.

"Enyu. You're next." Iason pointed to his lap, waiting.

The Xeronian only stared at him, horrified. He had already been punished brutally by Katze, and now Master Iason was going to spank him? What kind of hell had Jupiter sent him to?

"But I couldn't help it, either!" he wailed.

Iason narrowed his eyes, looking decidedly displeased. "I beg your pardon?"

"Master, I can't help myself when my interval is approaching!"

"That's not entirely true, and you know it. Do you take me for a fool? You may have certain sexual impulses, but you're not in your interval yet. Come here, Enyu."

Feeling Iason's decision was rather unfair, Enyu frowned, looking toward the mongrel, who was watching the unfolding scene with only slightly concealed delight. "But Riki—"

"Did you hear me? Obey me, *now!*" Iason commanded sharply.

But the Xeronian felt paralyzed, unable to physically move toward the fearsome Blondie.

"You've just doubled your punishment," the Blondie warned.

Suddenly, without really thinking about what he was doing, the Xeronian did what he had witnessed Riki do: he fled.

Dashing back toward the guest wing, he ran toward the pool entrance at the end of the hall. In his mind he knew he was only getting himself in worse trouble, but he was so frightened that he was desperate to believe he could escape the Blondie's punishment.

Surprised, Iason remained sitting for a moment, and then laughed softly. He took another sip of his wine, then got up and, with deliberate slowness, went off after his unruly pet. Riki skipped after him excitedly, smirking with utter delight.

The Blondie's footsteps echoed down the long corridor. Iason seemed to guess exactly where the Xeronian might try to hide, making for the pool area. He passed the first pool and then went outside onto the balcony. Enyu was at the far end of the deck, pathetically attempting to hide behind a fountain.

"You've just made this much worse for yourself, Enyu. Now you've earned yourself a thrashing," Iason warned.

"Please, Master Iason," Enyu begged, crying, "please—I'll do anything! Please don't punish me, *please!* I know I shouldn't have run...I'm sorry! I'm so scared!"

Riki, finally unable to contain his mirth at Enyu's complete lack of dignity in the face of certain punishment, began to snicker.

"Hush, Riki," Iason chided. "Or I *will* turn you over my knee."

The Blondie's threat was followed by dead silence and then Enyu's pathetic whimpering.

"Save those tears, Enyu. You'll need them," the Blondie remarked, approaching him menacingly. "And if I have to walk all the way over there to get you, you're really going to regret it."

Terrified of this threat but still unable to move, Enyu cowered, closing his eyes as though hoping to make the horrible situation just go away. Riki was biting his lip to keep from howling, jumping up and down on his bare feet with glee.

Iason made his way over to where Enyu was sitting with his face buried in his arms. "I'm a little surprised at your choice, Enyu," he sighed, crouching down. The Blondie's hair trailed on the balcony floor, shining in the evening sun. "I thought I wouldn't have a problem with you, but it seems I was mistaken. Look at me."

Reluctantly, Enyu lifted his head, peering up at Iason with terror.

"I won't tolerate this kind of disobedience, pet. When I tell you to do something, you'll *do* it." He stood up, towering over him, his hands on his hips. "You made me come and get you, and now you're going to be punished for it."

The Blondie unbuckled the belt he wore over his tunic; it was made of thick Icarian leather, which Iason knew would have a bite.

“Stand up,” he commanded.

“I’m sorry, Master,” Enyu whispered, rising.

“It’s too late for apologies now, Enyu. Turn around.”

The Xeronian did so, slowly, eyeing the belt Iason now held in one hand.

“Lean over.”

The Blondie gave him a little push toward a stone bench, and Enyu nearly fell onto it, reaching out to keep from losing his balance. The cool black stone reminded him of the gardens in Hiroshi’s palace on Xeron, for they had been filled with fountains and statues made of the same expensive onyx. But never at the palace had he been treated in such a manner or forced to undergo any sort of discipline.

“Lift your gown and hold it up.”

Enyu raised his gown as ordered, though rather slowly. “Please, Master,” he whispered, looking behind him.

“All the way up,” Iason commanded, nudging the hem of his gown up to his waist.

The frightened pet gathered the fabric into his hands, his entire body trembling.

“Put your hands back on the bench.”

The Xeronian did so, though found it a bit awkward while still holding the gown.

“Now, you’ll stay just as you are until I say we’re finished,” Iason announced. He then proceeded to give him a thorough strapping with his belt.

With each strike, Enyu made a sound that was something between a squawk and a screeching sob—or perhaps even a cat wail—a yelp so comical that Riki had to bite his lip and hold his sides to keep from snorting, his body quivering from his efforts to conceal his glee.

When at length Iason brought the discipline to an end, Enyu continued to make a fuss, though now in a low, mourning fashion, like some nameless night creature howling at the moons.

“Help me,” Riki gasped, now completely unable to keep from snickering and giggling. Cat-boy was just too funny. The more Riki tried not to laugh, the more he wanted to, and in the end he developed a bad case of the hiccups.

“Riki,” Iason sighed.

“What? I can’t help it,” Riki protested. “He *does* sound like a cat.”

Iason donned his belt again and Enyu finally began to quiet.

“I hope you don’t think I’m finished with you,” the Blondie remarked. “That was merely your punishment for running from me. You still have a spanking coming, which we’ll take care of now.”

With that, Iason held Enyu by the elbow, leading him back to the great hall and to his chair—the “punishment chair” as Riki thought of it, since it had become almost a ritual for his Master to administer spankings there.

Enyu whimpered all the way there, frightened out of his mind. His backside already burned horribly, and now his Master was going to punish him again? Jupiter had said that Iason Mink was *different* from other Blondies. Now he was starting to understand what she meant. One thing was certain: he was failing Jupiter’s commission to drive a wedge between Iason and his mongrel pet.

Jupiter had promised him that the Blondie would be pleased with his sexual gifts and would most likely sell Riki very soon, if Enyu succeeded in his mission. Then he would be the only pet of the powerful Iason Mink. But Jupiter hadn’t said anything about being beaten with a stick by a strange attendant or being disciplined by his new Master. And so far, Iason seemed just as attached to his mongrel pet—unnaturally so, in his view.

As soon as he reached his chair, Iason sat down and pulled Enyu over his knee. He pulled up his garment to reveal his bare bottom, keeping his arms pinned behind his back. Enyu’s buttocks were already reddened and starting to welt from his strapping, and his thighs showed marks from his earlier taming.

“Have you ever been spanked before?” Iason let his hand rest on the Xeronian’s warm skin, caressing him with his thumb.

“No, Master,” Enyu answered, trembling. He was additionally troubled by a developing erection from the Blondie’s intimate touch.

Iason felt a stirring against his thigh. He arched a brow, intrigued. "Are you aroused even now, my Enyu?"

Riki started at Iason's use of the word "my" when addressing Enyu, finding it most distasteful.

"Yes, Master," Enyu admitted.

"That's only because you don't know what's coming. You're not going to enjoy this. Now, if you had submitted to your spanking from the start, you would have fared better. But now you've forced me to be hard on you. Do you understand?"

"Yes...Master!" Enyu cried out, terrified.

"Good. We're making progress already." Iason took another leisurely sip of his wine, and then set the glass back on the table. "Now. It's time for your first lesson." With that, he proceeded to give Enyu his first taste of real discipline.

Riki was beside himself with joy. Cat-boy was getting a sound spanking. The Xeronian's strange squawks and screams, pathetic begging, whimpers and sobs were priceless. For once, someone other than himself was getting the brunt of Iason's fearsome arm.

Enyu was in utter misery. The spanking was unbearable, unrelenting and completely barbarian. Master Iason was horrifying as a disciplinarian, and the Xeronian felt certain he would die. Yes, he would die on the Blondie's lap...and then his Master would be sorry. This last thought gave him a little comfort. It was impossible to endure that much pain and not die, surely.

Though his hand burned dreadfully, Iason continued to spank Enyu with all the force he could muster. He was determined to curb Enyu's disobedience right from the start; and he had to admit, he was enjoying punishing the seductive little Xeronian that had been thrust upon him by Jupiter. The sight of the pet's bare bottom now red as the setting sun was enormously satisfying—and stimulating—to him, and the harder he spanked, the more his arousal increased.

When at length he brought the punishment to an end, Enyu lay limply over his knees, sobbing so loudly and forlornly that Iason had to smile. He felt confident that, unlike Riki, Enyu would most likely be completely obedient from that moment onward, and so his punishment would work as a deterrent. That it had *not* worked with

Riki was puzzling to him, although he was now convinced the mongrel simply had not been punished severely enough. Riki was a deviant, to be sure; taming him was taking far longer, and had been far more difficult, than he had anticipated. But as for Enyu, the Blondie felt sure that the spanking had worked its magic. The Xeronian would not be acting up any time soon.

Iason rubbed his hand over the pet's hot, punished flesh, now feeling quite aroused. He pressed Enyu's cheeks apart to get a peek at his portal, marveling over its tiny spiral. Unable to resist, he inserted a finger, intrigued to discover that his grip was surprisingly tight. He wiggled his finger a bit, curious.

Enyu started to calm at his Master's exploration, hoping desperately that the Blondie would continue. Despite his punishment he almost immediately regained his erection the moment Iason began fondling him.

Riki watched this developing situation jealously, finally unable to bear it.

"Hey," he protested softly, frowning.

The Blondie looked up, his eyes shining. "Does this make you jealous, pet?"

"Maybe."

The Blondie laughed, removing his finger, much to Enyu's disappointment.

"So. Enyu. Did I make clear the importance of obedience, and what happens to naughty pets in my household?"

"Yes, Master," the Xeronian answered, meekly.

"Good. Go wash your face and stay in your room until I call you."

Enyu obeyed, head hanging as he slunk away.

Riki eyed the Blondie's bulge jealously. "You're attracted to him," he accused.

"As are you," Iason replied.

"What?! I am not! Sheesh! Not at all."

"It's nothing to be ashamed of. He's emitting pheromones."

"Then," the mongrel replied, having no idea what pheromones were and too embarrassed to let Iason know, "you admit you *are* attracted to him."

The Blondie only smiled. "Your jealousy is endearing, love."

"Can't you get rid of him?" Riki whispered.

"I've already told you. There's nothing I can do, at least not right away, without offending Jupiter."

"I hate Jupiter. Wiry *bitch*."

"Now, hush," Iason cautioned, a bit sharply. Then he held out his hand. "Come here." The mongrel climbed onto his lap, sighing. Iason wrapped his arms around him, giving him a kiss on his cheek. "Are you looking forward to tonight, love?"

"Yeah," Riki admitted, smiling. "So I can stop calling you Master, now, right?"

"Very well," Iason nodded, realizing he had already forgotten to enforce his own rule.

The mongrel snuggled up against him. "I can do whatever I want?"

"Yes, pet. Within reason."

"What! You never said that before!"

"If you were planning to leave marks, then no, pet."

"Damn it."

"I see. So, you had an agenda of punishment worked out for me?"

"Could I spank you just a *little*, or use the G-strap?"

"You may. But when I say stop, you must stop. Understood?"

"Yeah," Riki muttered, wishing he had the luxury of cutting off his punishment when it got too unbearable. But still—*some* discipline was better than none at all.

"Now that I think of it, the G-strap is gone. The drawer was emptied out last night," Iason murmured thoughtfully. "I need to contact Raoul about that."

"Iason?"

"Yes, my little wolf cub?"

"How did you find me yesterday? Raoul said he blocked the tracer signal."

"He did. When I realized there was no way to find you, I nearly...went out of my mind." Suddenly flooded by memories of the previous day's drama, the Blondie pulled his pet close, hugging him tightly. "Oh Riki...I don't know what I would have done if I hadn't been able to find you."

“I knew you’d come.”

Iason held him tighter, not wanting to frighten his pet with the cold truth: that without his tracer signature, he *shouldn’t* have been able to locate him.

“So...how *did* you find me?” Riki whispered, his face pressed against Iason’s chest so closely that he could hear his heartbeat, steady and solid.

“To be honest, it’s something I can’t explain.”

“I tried to send you a message with my thoughts about where I was,” the mongrel laughed. “Maybe you got it. I know it’s silly, but I was a bit scared, actually. I didn’t know what else to do.”

For a moment the Blondie said nothing, mulling this over. “Riki,” he said finally. “I saw you. In my mind, that is. It was almost a vision. That’s how I knew where you were.”

“Seriously? Hey! There was this guy in Midas who was poisoned by Agatha—just like you. He survived, too. And the rumor was that he developed certain...*powers*. Like he had visions, could see what was happening someplace else in the city. Personally I thought it was a load of crap—I figured he was just trying to nail some ass. But maybe there’s something to it, this whole deal with Agatha’s Halo.”

“Perhaps,” Iason answered, smiling.

“Hey! Maybe we could develop it, and then we could send each other secret messages!”

The Blondie laughed, hugging him. “I’m never letting you go again, pet.”

“You think I’m being silly,” Riki sulked. He pulled up his knees so that his bare feet were pressed against the inside of the chair.

“Not so,” Iason murmured, suddenly cognizant of his own unconsummated arousal. He began to toy with the waistband of Riki’s pants.

“You’re giving me a hard-on.”

“Let’s see,” the Blondie whispered, unzipping the mongrel’s pants and slipping a hand inside.

Riki responded immediately to his touch, his cock swelling quickly beneath his warm fingers.

Iason tugged at his pants. “Take these off,” he commanded.



“Yeah, okay.” Riki lifted his hips and the Blondie helped pull them off, smiling when his pet gave a little kick and sent them across the floor.

“Open your legs for me.”

The mongrel obeyed, letting his knees fall open, his eyes shining as Iason began stroking him more purposefully.

“That’s it. You like this, don’t you?”

“Yeah.” Riki was breathing a little harder, now fully aroused.

The Blondie continued to pleasure him, his long fingers stroking his length and then exploring down between his legs, caressing him and brushing his fingers over his portal.

Then he pulled his hand away and sucked seductively on two fingers. Riki moaned, squirming with lust. Iason then inserted a finger and began slowly thrusting as he continued stroking him with his other hand.

“That feels nice. I’m gonna come fast.”

Iason began pumping him while he thrust his fingers wildly inside him with his other hand.

“God yeah...holy shit!”

“That’s it. Don’t hold back.”

The mongrel groaned, biting his lip.

“Yes. Just like that,” Iason breathed, excited.

“Fucking Jupiter!”

Riki spread his legs wider and moved his feet further apart, letting his head hang back over the side of the chair.

“You’re my beautiful little mongrel.”

“Ohhh,” Riki moaned, urgently, closing his eyes.

“Don’t come,” Iason whispered. “Don’t you *dare* come.”

“What?” the mongrel exclaimed, opening an eye with a bewildered look.

“You heard me. I told you not to come.”

Iason was now so aroused he could hardly contain himself; he began working Riki so fast that there was simply no way the mongrel could resist ejaculating.

“If you come, I shall punish you.”

“Holy fuck!”

Riki groaned, his semen shooting up in glorious arcs and sliding down the Blondie's hand.

"Good boy," Iason whispered.

The mongrel continued to pant for a few moments, trying to catch his breath. "Why the hell did you tell me not to come?" he demanded, finally.

The Blondie laughed. "I was teasing you, love."

"Well, you'd better not punish me, then. I couldn't help it, and you know it."

"I shall punish you if it pleases me to."

Riki rolled his eyes at this. "Crazy Blondie."

Iason was so rigid he felt ready to burst. "Riki, I need you."

"But I'm too sore!"

"I'm sorry, pet," Iason replied, rising.

Riki scrambled to his feet, nearly dumped onto the floor. "Hey! Thanks for practically knocking me on my ass!"

"Go bend over that table. That shall be your punishment."

"I already told you, I'm too sore. Let me suck you off. Please?" Riki got down on his knees, fumbling with his Master's trouser flap.

"Riki," Iason scolded but then felt unable to move when the mongrel pressed his lips up against the tip of his erection.

He gasped, widening his stance and letting his hands rest on the mongrel's head.

Encouraged, Riki swirled his tongue around the head of his organ as provocatively as he could.

Iason shivered. "Naughty pet."

"You like me naughty," Riki murmured, pausing for a moment and then suckling him gently.

"Mmmm." Iason watched him, smiling.

"Don't come," the mongrel teased, "or tonight I'll punish *you*."

"Pet."

Riki flicked his tongue under Iason's ridge, arching a brow as he looked up. "Yeah?"

"Drink me." The Blondie held Riki's head between his hands and ejaculated, his semen spilling onto his lips and down his chin.

Riki lapped up the seed, smiling at Iason's soft gasps and moans.

"You didn't last long that time," he remarked.

"No, I suppose not," the Blondie agreed.

"Are you *blushing*?"

"Certainly not."

"You are! You're blushing!"

"I confess I released far earlier than I intended."

Delighted, the mongrel leaned back on his heels, shaking a finger at him. "This time *you* were very naughty. I told you not to come and you did, so I'm going to have to punish you, like I promised."

"Are you now?"

"Yes. Naughty Blondies who come when they're not supposed to get punished."

Iason laughed, enjoying his pet's teasing.

Riki stood up, wiping some residual semen from his face with his arm. "You sure gave me a mouthful that time. I guess you were pretty worked up."

"Riki," Iason sighed, wrapping his arms around him and holding him for a long moment.

"Thanks for not fucking me. I wasn't kidding. My ass still hurts—hey!" he exclaimed suddenly, having spied Omaki's box on the bar counter near the foyer. "What's in that box over there?"

"Go and see, pet. It's from the Taming Tower."

Riki retrieved his pants and tugged them on excitedly. "Really? Can I open it?"

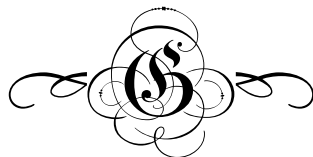
The Blondie nodded, moving behind the bar counter to pour himself some more wine. "You may. Might I remind you, however, that what you find in that box is most likely going to eventually be used on *you*."

Ignoring this last warning, Riki happily tore open the box, staring at its contents with surprise.

"Holy shit!"

The box was completely filled with instruments of discipline and pleasure. At the very top of the pile was a letter with a Blondie's seal, which Riki immediately handed to Iason without even looking.

Iason broke the seal and opened the letter, which read:



*Iason,*

*Your box of toys as promised, as per our little arrangement.*

*The matter between us has been resolved—I believe to your satisfaction. I have something else of interest to you, if you are willing to pay another 50,000 credits. You might be able to guess what that is. Very interesting viewing, and it will bring back a few memories, I think? Does the phrase "Aristian virgin" ring any bells?*

*What did you think of my Aki?*

*Call me; let's go out for drinks and catch up on old times. Or if you prefer, just pay me and I'll release the footage.*

*Omaki*

---

Scowling, Iason folded the letter and tucked it in his pocket. He knew exactly what Omaki referred to, though he found it a bit surprising that such footage existed and that this was the first he was hearing of it. Had Omaki truly kept evidence of his indiscretion all these years? And if so, why was he blackmailing him *now*?

Iason sighed, turning his attention to Riki, who had just pulled something out of the box. It was a long, phallic implement with raised bumps on its surface. He switched it on and it began vibrating. Snickering, Riki changed the settings to see what else it would do, and then dropped it, yelping.

"Ouch! That fucking hurt! It...it...*shocked* me or something."

“What setting did you have it on?”

“Huh?” Riki picked the device up carefully by one end and checked. “Oh. Shock.”

Grinning sheepishly, he tried another setting: G-wave.

“I don’t feel anything,” he complained.

“That’s because it doesn’t go in your hand, pet.”

Riki scowled at him, shutting the vibrator off and tossing it aside. He peered in the box. “Ooo,” he breathed, picking up a round, thin paddle. “Can I paddle you with this? It doesn’t look too bad, right?”

“We’ll see.”

“Tease.”

Next Riki discovered what looked like a chain-mesh bikini with open areas for the genital and anal regions. It looked too small for Iason, so he flung it aside.

“Let me see that,” the Blondie ordered.

“I’m not wearing it,” Riki asserted. He picked it up and tossed it to him, scowling.

“We’ll see about that.” Iason examined the bikini with amusement. “Oh yes. I want to see you in this.”

Riki rolled his eyes and pulled out another outfit that was obviously also designed for him—a skimpy mesh shorts and tank set, the top looking far too small to provide adequate coverage, in his view. Once again he attempted to throw it over his shoulder and was intercepted by Iason, who immediately demanded that he put it on.

“Why don’t I just walk around naked, if you’re having me wear that thing?”

“Must you always argue with me? You heard me. Put it on.”

Sighing, the mongrel pulled off his shirt and pants and donned the new outfit. “You’ve got to be bloody kidding,” he grumbled. The mesh offered no coverage whatsoever to certain regions.

“Very appealing. You’ll wear that for the rest of the evening.” Iason loved the look of his pet so attired, his midriff bare and the mesh shorts riding low on his hips, revealing the enticing hollows of Riki’s abdomen.

“What!”

“Stop making a fuss. You’ll wear it, and that’s final.”

Sighing dramatically, Riki continued exploring Omaki's box. He picked up a formidable-looking paddle, and then quickly attempted to hide it back inside the box.

"Pet." The Blondie snapped his fingers, holding out his hand.

Reluctantly, Riki surrendered the paddle.

Iason examined it with delight. "Oh, my. An emission paddle." He turned the paddle around in his hands, smiling. "With intensity settings. Ohhhh," he laughed brokenly. "You'd better behave yourself *now*, Riki."

"Uh huh." The mongrel shot him a bored look, feigning indifference. Next he pulled out a kasey-whip. Nervously, he tipped it on its end to read the class number. C-21. C-21? Was there even such a model? "I thought C-20 killed you. So what does C-21 do, bring you back to life?"

"Ah, a C-21, is it? My, my. And I thought those were banned."

"What could it possibly do that's worse than a C-20?" Riki demanded. "And the C-20's not banned?"

"The C-21 comes from Alpha Zen, part of the G-wave line specially designed for eunuchs. As it punishes it stimulates, much like the G-strap."

"You mean it could make a eunuch horny?"

"So it's said. But if it's used on a non-eunuch, the damage to sexual function is irreparable. It's the equivalent of castration."

"Why the hell is it in the box?!" Riki yelled, horrified. "What if you had used it by mistake?"

"Calm down, love. This is Omaki's little joke. He knows perfectly well I'd check the class number. Everyone in Tanagura has heard about our little mishap."

"Well, his sense of humor sucks," Riki muttered. "That *is* worse than a C-20."

Next he pulled out some ropes, gags and several vials of oil, nodding approvingly.

"Cool!" he exclaimed, momentarily transfixed by the intricate swirling design on a beautiful red and black taming stick. Suddenly realizing what he held, he again attempted to hide it back in the box.

"Riki."

Sighing, the mongrel relinquished the taming stick to Iason, who waited with an outstretched hand.

“Magnificent.”

The Blondie turned the taming stick over in his hands, marveling over the beauty of its craftsmanship. The design was certainly Urasian, like his MXV Emperor, similarly studded with gems—onyx and ruby, primarily. The stones projected a bit from the surface of the stick, which would increase the pain of each blow.

“A Xeronian import, I’ll wager.”

“This probably goes with it,” Riki remarked, tossing him a black leather belt with the same design and several large inlaid rubies.

Iason stood up, removed his old taming belt, and then tried on the new one, sliding the taming stick smoothly into the sheath. He nodded his approval.

“What do you think, pet?” He put his hands on his hips, waiting for Riki’s feedback.

“Mmmm.” The mongrel found the new taming stick less alluring when it hung threateningly against his Master’s thigh.

“This must be worth at least 30,000 credits,” Iason mused, puzzling over why Omaki would try to blackmail him and then send him such expensive gifts.

A buzz at the door interrupted his thoughts.

“Ah. They’ve arrived. Pet, put all that away. You can finish looking through it later.”

“Who’s arrived?”

“My new bodyguards.”

“Bodyguards?” Riki slowly refilled the box, looking up at Iason with a perplexed look on his face.

“Yes, Riki. What happened last night will never happen again.”

Iason walked toward the door. “Wait.” This single word prevented the door from automatically opening at his approach. “Identify yourself,” he commanded, speaking into the intercom.

“Odi, Freyn and Askel. Your new bodyguards.”

The door slid open, admitting the three men, all of whom were extraordinarily tall—nearly as tall as Iason.

“You should have made us prove our identity,” Odi chided.

"I know. But I expected you."

"That makes no difference," Freyn argued, shaking his head. "Someone may be spying on you. They'd know we were expected and could have come posing as us."

"We'll scan your place for taps and cams, but someone could still always use remote microphones to listen in," Odi remarked.

Askel examined the door panel, hands on hips. "You need a visual board as well. I'm surprised you haven't seen to that already, after the Agatha incident you told us about."

Iason nodded. "Whatever you need to secure these premises."

The men nodded, grimly, arms across their chests or on their hips—a formidable crew.

Riki watched all this with fascination. Iason had acquired bodyguards? Because of what had happened to him?

Two of the men looked somewhat similar, and he guessed they were brothers. They looked strong and uncompromising, but not unfriendly. The third man, Odi, was dark and menacing—definitely a bit intimidating. Not the sort of fellow one would want to cross.

Iason led them toward the guest wing. "I'll show you to your rooms. I want at least one of you guarding the entrance at all times."

"Two of us will guard," Odi replied. "Except when you venture out. Then two of us will accompany you and the third will remain. In my view a fourth man would be advisable. That way two of us would always be here whenever you go out."

"I'll see to it."

Iason accessed the guest wing command panel to open all the doors to the suites—except one—and then entered the corridor, gesturing to the selection of rooms.

"Take your pick. All are available except this one," he pointed to Enyu's room, "and the last room on the right."

Riki was now beside himself with excitement. "Can I have a new room, too?" he asked hopefully, tugging on Iason's sleeve.

"Yes, pet. If you had just been a little more patient, I fully intended to allow you to choose a new room."

Beaming, Riki dashed down the hall, trying to get a glimpse of each room before the bodyguards made their selections.



“What about this one?” he asked, pointing to the very room that Iason had said was off-limits.

“Not that one, pet.”

“Why not?”

“Riki, what did I just say? Must you always test me? Pick another one. No more questions.”

Curious, but wisely obeying his Master’s mandate, Riki then turned to the other side of the hall and peered into the last room on the left. He could immediately tell from the décor it was the room he wanted: the walls were hung with ancient Urasian shields and axes.

“This one!” he yelled.

“Lower your voice,” Iason scolded, though privately he found his pet’s excitement endearing and wished he had thought to open the guest wing sooner.

Riki darted into the room and began exploring its posh features. The suite was large—the size of an apartment—and was equipped with a bar, a kitchen and a full-sized bath with a sunken tub as well as a separate shower. The bedroom walls were paneled with Icarian white wood and hung with tapestries and shields.

“Fuck yes,” Riki breathed.

He sauntered back into the living area, running his hand over the soft, dark leather of the sofa. Then his gaze moved to the foot table, which was made of an immense shield topped with glass. On it was a holograph projector. He immediately switched it on, delighted at the sight of two young pets copulating in the middle of the room. He made himself comfortable on the sofa, his arms behind his head, wondering how he could persuade Iason to remove his ring restrictions so he could sit in his room and masturbate all day.

His new room, Riki decided, was much better than Enyu’s. It was bigger, it had a sunken bath, the décor was more interesting and the kitchen area was far more spacious.

Iason entered, pleased to see Riki looking so happy. “So, do you like your room, my pet?”

“It’s bloody brilliant!”

“What did you think of the billiard room?”

“Billiard room?” Riki sat up, surprised.

The Blondie moved toward a door Riki had assumed was a closet, opening it to reveal another room that featured a billiard table, a few arcade units and more luxurious seating.

“Would you like me to teach you to play?” Iason asked.

“Ha,” Riki snorted. “You teach me? I’ll have you know I’m the best pool-player in Ceres.”

“Is that so? Then, we’ll most definitely have to make a pool date.”

This reminded Riki of another matter that had been on his mind. “Iason, can we fill the pools? Please? I need more exercise...you want me to look good, right?”

“Of course. I had intended to do so. We’ll start filling them today.”

“Awesome!” The mongrel flung his arms around Iason’s neck and jumped up to kiss him.

Iason laughed, thrilled with his pet’s affection. He sat down on the sofa, pulling Riki onto his lap.

“I got the best room, didn’t I?” Riki asserted, his eyes shining.

“I knew you would choose this one,” the Blondie answered, kissing his forehead.

“What’s wrong with that room across the hall?”

Iason’s grew solemn, his eyes full of sadness and hurt. “Leave it alone, pet,” he whispered.

Riki stared at him, perplexed. He had never seen Iason look so downcast. What could possibly be in the room that would make him pull such a face? The room...was it why the guest wing had been sealed off for so long?

He wanted to console Iason but didn’t know how. So he snuggled back against him, playing with a lock of the Blondie’s soft hair as he often did, and saying nothing. But somehow between them there was an unspoken understanding that Iason was hurting and that Riki trying to comfort him.

The Blondie wrapped his arms around his pet, sighing. “I love holding you, Riki.”

“Your hair feels nice,” the mongrel remarked, shifting a strand of the blond hair between his fingers. “How do you make it so soft?”

“I don’t know, pet.”

“You mean it just comes like that?”

Iason laughed. "Yes. It 'just comes like that'."

"You know what I mean. You don't do anything special?" Riki buried his face in the Blondie's shiny hair, inhaling deeply. "And it smells really good, too. Hey! Can I brush it?"

"Of course," Iason replied, pleased. "There should be a brush on your dressing table."

"I have a dressing table?"

Riki jumped up and went into his bedroom to investigate. He found the table next to his bed. It was made of Amoian cherry oak and on it sat a tray of silver-plated grooming utensils and a few bottles of cologne. The dresser had several small drawers, which were empty but for a few embroidered handkerchiefs. He grabbed the brush and went back into the sitting area. Iason seemed deep in thought, though his expression softened when Riki approached him.

"Why don't you...um...turn around, and I'll get on the sofa here behind you," the mongrel suggested, positioning himself behind Iason. With slow, gentle strokes he began to brush out his Master's long hair.

Iason sighed deeply, closing his eyes. "That feels heavenly, love."

"I like doing this. We should do this every day."

"Mmmm."

"This sure is a fancy brush. It must have cost like, a billion credits. You sure have it made, Iason. Wealth, looks, the entire city kissing your ass—plus you have *me*."

Riki grinned, and though Iason could not see his face, he could hear the mongrel's teasing in his voice.

"I want to finish going through that box tonight. And I want to tie you up. Can I?"

"Yes, love. I told you, you may do whatever you like...within reason, of course."

Riki continued brushing the Blondie's hair, plotting what he was going to do that evening.

"I really ought to be able to punish you. It's only fair...you're always punishing *me*."

"I only punish you because you continue to be disobedient," Iason replied softly, his eyes still closed.

“Yeah but, like today it was a total rip-off. Here I am practically half-dead from being tortured by Raoul and I get punished *three* more times on top of it. And I didn’t even do anything! It was all stupid cat-boy. I *hate* that little feline freak.”

Iason turned back around and held out his arms.

“Come here, Riki.”

Riki crawled dutifully onto his lap, pouting a little.

“All you have to do is behave and you’ll never be punished again,” Iason whispered, putting his arms around him. “Is that really so hard?”

The mongrel sighed loudly. “You’ll never understand. Because yeah, it is hard. I wasn’t born at the Pet Academy, you know. I had a life...before I came here. I was the leader of the most kick-ass gang in Ceres. I did whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted to do it. I made my own rules.”

“Do you dislike being my pet so very much?” Iason asked, stroking Riki’s cheek with his thumb.

“I just miss my freedom,” he answered.

“I see.”

They both fell silent for awhile. Riki sensed the Blondie’s disappointment and sadness and wanted to say something to relieve the sudden awkwardness between them. “I love the room, though,” he said, finally.

The Blondie rewarded him with a smile, pulling him close.



KATZE WAS SURPRISED TO SEE TWO AMOIANs standing outside the penthouse when he returned that evening. They nodded at him, seeming to know who he was.

“Katze,” one said, gruffly.

The eunuch stopped. “You are?”

“Freyn...and this is Askel. We’re the new bodyguards.” They stepped aside and allowed Katze to put his hand on the scanner, which opened the door.

Katze nodded. A little late...but better late than never. "How did you know me?"

Freyn pulled a flip-pad projector from his pocket and turned it on, projecting a 3-dimensional image of Katze into the corridor.

"Impressive. I'll be seeing you around, then."

The brothers nodded almost imperceptibly as he entered the penthouse. Katze felt safer just knowing they were there. He knew that Iason hated the idea of bodyguards, which was why he had never hired any. Raoul had urged Iason countless times to acquire personal protection. That he would finally do so now *because* of Raoul was strangely ironic.

Iason was waiting for him, whip in hand. The mere sight of the Blondie sent a shiver through him, although Katze could tell the opiates he had taken were starting to kick in. His eyes were drawn to the T-stand that had been rolled into the great hall.

So. He was to be restrained.

Katze was trembling. Truly, he had never been more frightened in his life. He knew the whipping would not be pleasant. It would be agony, of that much there was no doubt.

"Do you need to relieve yourself before we begin?" Iason asked.

"No."

"Get undressed."

"Completely?"

"Yes, Katze."

The eunuch swallowed, feeling extraordinarily embarrassed to be removing all his clothes. He undressed slowly.

"Riki! Enyu!" Iason bellowed.

"Are they going to watch?"

"Yes."

Mortified, Katze stood completely naked while the pets ambled into the hall. They both stopped to gape at him.

But Katze refused to cower. He stood, back straight, his eunuch status proudly displayed. What he didn't know is that both Riki and Enyu regarded him with admiration, marveling over his impressive physique, which was extraordinarily masculine in every way but one. Iason glanced at him briefly but was too preoccupied with

preparing himself for the whipping to give much thought to the eunuch's nakedness.

"Sit down, pets," he commanded.

Riki immediately made a beeline for Iason's chair, which was the most comfortable chair in the hall. Enyu was forced to take a seat off to the side and resented having the second-best seat.

"Hold out your arm," Iason ordered. He then secured Katze's wrist in an upper cuff of the T-stand.

Without waiting to be asked, Katze held out his other arm, which Iason similarly cuffed. The Blondie knelt down, cuffing his ankle to the T-stand. Again Katze dutifully offered the other limb without being asked. After adjusting the leg restraints to shoulder-width, Iason stepped back.

Retrieving his whip from under his belt where he had tucked it, the Blondie opened the command panel by pushing on the tongue of the Urasian-style gripping-beast that ornamented the handsomely-engraved handle. The hall was dead silent as everyone waited for the whipping to begin. The bodyguards had been advised as to what was coming, and Odi had opted to watch the whipping from the balcony, where he stood, smoking.

"You have a choice, Katze. I can set this to Accelerator for less scarring and faster healing. But it will hurt far more."

"Accelerator," Katze replied without hesitating.

Iason raised his eyebrows, a little surprised at Katze's choice.

Odi grinned. He liked this Katze...the eunuch was no coward.

"Katze, you are about to be punished for an unforgivable transgression: sexual congress with my pet. Do you have anything to say before we begin?"

"I would like to say, Master Iason," Katze replied boldly, "that it was fucking worth it. It had been a long time since I sucked anyone off, and I enjoyed it."

Riki was amused with this defiant reply in the face of punishment, as was Odi, who took a long drag on his cigarette to keep from laughing. Enyu watched the unfolding situation with joy as he realized the mean attendant who had beat him with the taming stick was about to be whipped.

Iason stared thoughtfully at the handle of his whip, which he turned around slowly in his hands, the tiniest curl of his lip suggesting a smile. "I see. Let's see if you feel the same in about twenty minutes."

With that, he suddenly cracked his whip, startling Enyu, who yelped in surprise. Riki now sobered as Katze's punishment became imminent, wishing there was something he could do.

The Blondie began to pace, cracking the whip menacingly. "This sentence is nothing compared to what will happen if you dare touch my Riki again. Should you be so foolish, it will be the *last* thing you do. Is that understood?"

"Yes. It will not happen again." Katze closed his eyes. He braced himself, thankful for the opiates that were already in his system.

"Good. It's time, Katze."

Iason took a step back and then rushed toward him, unleashing the force of the whip across his bare back. Katze screamed in agony, unable to help himself as the whip tore into his flesh. Pacing for a brief moment, the Blondie lunged forward and sent the whip flying again. Blood streamed from the gaping lash marks, and Katze felt he would die from the pain. It was too much.

Riki watched the whipping in horror. This was his doing. He had solicited Katze's sex, and yet Katze was the one who was truly paying for it. Iason was certainly not holding back, and a whip in the Blondie's hand was proving to be a formidable combination.

Although Iason had seemed rather impassive and cool-headed before the punishment began, Riki realized that he was most definitely angry, that the whipping had somehow tapped into a buried rage of some kind. He could tell this by the hard line of his mouth, by the sharp flick of his wrist as he cracked the whip threateningly, and by the fury with which he released his blows.

Iason was, in fact, furious. Katze's defiant comment ate away at him. He began to dredge up memories of the day he had discovered his pet in bed with Daryl and Katze. Deep inside, the Blondie felt he had never really punished Katze adequately for that transgression, despite his broken ribs and other injuries. Now, the eunuch's naked body became a canvas on which to express his rage, and Iason's



© Katze's Punishment ©

Art by Tata





whip, the artist's brush. He whipped him mercilessly, eliciting unearthly screams from the miserable youth.

And then, silence.

Worried, Riki slid from his chair and approached Iason, tugging on his sleeve.

"Please, Iason. Please stop."

"Back to your seat, Riki!" Iason answered, sharply.

"Punish *me*. I'm the one who asked for it. Are you trying to kill him? He's already out, look at him!"

Katze was, in fact, unconscious, and he was also bleeding profusely. Iason realized then that his pet was right. In his fury, he had gone too far. Tossing the whip aside, he freed the eunuch from his restraints, carrying his limp and bloody body to Daryl's room.

With a loud moan, Katze stirred in Iason's arms. His eyes fluttered open and he focused with fear and confusion on the Blondie's face.

"It's over. You've taken your punishment," Iason whispered.

Eyes rolling back, Katze passed out again.

Riki rushed to get the medical kit and then joined Iason, who was positioning Katze gently on the bed. Together they worked to clean him up. Once they had wiped up all the blood and disinfected the wounds, Riki picked up a can of Accelerator.

"He wanted me to apply this. I want to do it now while he's out."

Nodding, Iason moved aside while Riki applied the stinging spray. Katze did not even stir.

"Something's wrong," Iason murmured. "He shouldn't be—"

Katze's low groan was greeted with looks of relief. The eunuch's eyes opened momentarily but almost immediately shut again.

"Dammit, Iason," Riki whispered. "You almost killed him."

"Don't take that tone with me," the Blondie scolded.

"For crying out loud, all he did was suck me off! He didn't deserve to be practically whipped to death!"

"Hush, pet."

Iason was firm in his admonishment, although privately he felt perhaps he *had* punished Katze a bit too harshly.

"How do you think it makes *me* feel? It's my fault!"

“Actions have consequences. Katze knew perfectly well you were off-limits. He deserved every strike of that whip.”

“That’s easy for *you* to say! You’ve never been whipped!”

“Riki, I am not going to argue with you about this.”

The mongrel sighed but wisely held his tongue.

As Iason rose to leave, Riki motioned to the bed. “I’m gonna stay with him a while.”

“Don’t stay too long. We have business in the bedroom.”

Although Katze’s punishment had rather spoiled the mongrel’s carnal agenda, he was definitely looking forward to the opportunity to make the Blondie suffer a bit.

“Like I’d forget that? I’ll be out in a bit—and we’re doing it in *my* room tonight.”

“As you wish, Master Riki.” With a mock bow, Iason left the room.

Katze groaned again, and Riki reached out to stroke his hair. “I’m sorry, Katze,” he whispered.

## Iason's Penthouse

GROANING, KATZE OPENED HIS EYES. He felt confused. Why was he in Daryl's room? The last thing he remembered was Iason's face...and before that, the unbelievable hell of his whipping. Now he was lying facedown, and his back felt hot and raw. He groaned again, overcome with excruciating pain.

Riki crouched down next to him, smiling. "You're still alive. I was a little worried there for a moment."

"Please fucking kill me," he whispered.

"Can't do it. Daryl would have a royal fit and chain me up again."

"It's unbearable."

Riki leaned in close. "Where's your stash?"

"In the closet. Daryl's housecoat—right pocket. Get me a Seven."

Grinning, Riki went to explore Katze's hoard of contraband, locating the O-7. "I thought these were banned," he marveled. "I didn't even know you could still find these."

"If it's out there, I can find it," Katze gasped. "Hurry up."

"Are you sure this won't kill you? Because if you overdose, Iason will attach a permanent spanking device to my ass."

Katze managed a slight smile. "Riki. I pop 'em all the time, just for kicks."

"Ooo. Aren't you the tough one." The mongrel shook his head at Katze's boldness, wondering what Daryl thought of his recreational forays. "I'll get you a drink."

"Don't need it. Just stick it in my mouth."

"Stick it in your mouth? Now that's what got you into this mess in the first place," Riki quipped.

"Smartass." Katze winced. "Fucking hurry up."

Riki gave him the opiate, nodding when he swallowed it with ease. "Impressive. No wonder you were so good."

Katze answered this with another groan. His back was starting to throb. It felt as if glass was stuck in his skin, continuing to cut him.

"So do you still think it was worth it, sucking me off?"

"Hell no," Katze snorted. "Don't think for a minute I really meant that, you little brat."

"I was gonna say. Because what would Daryl think?"

"I just wanted to go down with some dignity."

Riki smiled, remembering Katze's twelfth hour defiance with admiration. "That you did. It was bleeding brilliant. You should have seen Iason's face when you said that. He was pissed as hell."

"So I gathered. I thought he was going to kill me."

"He almost did. I saved you, by the way."

"Don't expect any rewards, hero. You already got yours."

"I know. If anything, I should be sucking *you* off."

Katze sighed dramatically. "Here we go. Rubbing it in again. But it's just as well I can't accept your offer. I'm taken, you know."

"How's Daryl?" Riki asked, suddenly recollecting that Katze had visited him.

"Better, actually. He'll be released in two days."

"Does that mean you'll be leaving?" Riki was a little disappointed, although he was anxious to see Daryl.

"Not for a while. He'll need to rest, so I'm taking over his duties while he's recovering."

"Oh. I see," Riki grinned. "And my guess is he'll have a very long recovery while you're staying in his bed."

Katze managed a slight smile. He was starting to feel much better.

"It's kicking in, isn't it?"

"Oh yes."

"Oh! You missed it. Cat-boy really got it today. Iason whipped him raw with his belt—you should have heard him howl!"

"Mmmm," Katze smiled.

"You're getting sleepy?"

"Yeah." Then he perked up. "Accelerator, Riki."

"I already applied it, when you were out."

"Yeah?" Katze sighed, closing his eyes and drifting off to sleep.

Riki brushed the hair from Katze's eyes, frowning. He looked at his whipped backside, shivering. From his back down to his thighs, his skin was torn with the fruits of Iason's fury, lash marks that cut deep into the beautiful youth's flesh. He admired Katze for insisting on acceleration despite its mind-numbing pain and hoped, for his sake, that he would escape massive scarring. He knew Daryl would not care—but Katze would.

Rising, Riki went out to smoke. He decided to explore the new balcony and so made for the pool area. As he approached, he became excited by the sound of water; Iason was having the pools filled as he had promised. He spent a moment admiring the immense indoor pool before continuing on to the outdoor balcony. There he was pleasantly surprised by the gurgling of the fountains, which were now filled with water. Already a tiny orange miramar had found a fountain and was happily taking a bath, shaking its beautiful plumage in the fresh water.

An onyx stone bench beneath an awning invited his repose, and he sat down, lit a smoke and enjoyed the view. The new moon was only two days away, the waning moons suspended in the curtain of darkness as golden crescents. Myriad stars filled the sky like glittering crystals, and he studied them, trying to find a constellation he knew. Icaria was the one Guy had taught him, and now he scanned the sky, searching for it.

"Are you looking for something, pet?" Iason asked softly.

"Bloody hell," Riki yelped, startled. "You're too damned quiet. You should wear a fucking bell or something."

"That would defeat the purpose of spying on you. What are you looking for?"

"This one constellation. Icaria."

Iason looked up and immediately pointed to it. "See the five stars in a straight line, and then the cluster of stars above it? Work your way up from there."

"I see it! That's it!! The one with the huge hard-on!"

The Blondie gave a soft laugh, sitting down next to him and crossing his legs gracefully.

"It's really nice out here, Iason. Oh! Thanks for filling the pools. I can't wait to go for a swim. These fountains are really cool, too. I saw a little...orange bird."

"An orange miramer. They only come out at night."

"It was taking a bath in one of the fountains. And what's this for?" Riki pointed to a depression on the deck that was a few feet deep. "It looks like a bathtub."

"A pond. I once kept koi and kruska in it."

"Can we fill it?" Riki asked, excited. "And put fish in it?"

"The landscapers are coming tomorrow. They'll bring plants and fill up the pond." Iason had decided that if the guest wing was going to be in use, he would restore it to its original glory. The pool gardens had been nothing short of a small paradise, and he had to admit that he missed them.

"This is awesome out here. Why did you keep all this sealed up?"

Iason remained silent, averting his eyes.

Sensing that he had once again touched on a sensitive subject, Riki quickly shifted gears. "I thought you were gonna kill Katze."

"His punishment fit his crime," Iason replied, firmly.

"I don't know about *that*. It seemed a bit extreme to me."

The Blondie turned to him, staring at him with such dark, angry intensity that Riki instinctively flinched.

"Riki. What happened that night at Serendipity, and later at the penthouse, can never happen again. Katze is fortunate I *didn't* whip him to death."

For a long moment neither of them spoke. Iason's gaze was unwavering, communicating all his anger and pain over Riki's illicit congress with the eunuch.

Riki tossed his smoke over the ledge, sighing. "You know, Iason, sometimes you can be a bit *intense*. What you need is a good fucking." He slid his hand across the Blondie's thigh, caressing him.

Immediately responding to his touch, Iason relaxed, his anger softening and slowly fading.

"We're going to go into my bedroom and finish looking through Omaki's box. And after that, I have all sorts of plans for you, my naughty Blondie pet," Riki announced.

"I see. You have plans for me." Iason smiled, amused by the mongrel's authoritarian manner.

"Yeah, I sure as fucking hell do."

With that, he pulled Iason toward him for a long, languid kiss, running his hands through the Blondie's heavenly-soft, fragrant hair. Sliding his hand up Iason's thigh, Riki ascertained his readiness, encouraging his arousal with the palm of his hand. He broke away and then, with a half smile, smacked Iason's thigh.

"Let's go."



*Twenty years earlier.*

BITING HIS LIP TO KEEP FROM LAUGHING, Iason stole into the penthouse, anxious to give Raoul a little surprise. He wasn't expected back so soon, but his trip to Urus had been truncated by a small uprising outside the convention center. It was time for some payback for all Raoul's little pranks, such as the time he slipped a live panther lizard into Iason's wineglass during the Academy graduation cotillion, or the time he switched the connection codes on the command center so that Iason called Jupiter rather than him—much to Iason's mortification and Jupiter's delight. And then, of course, there was the time during their Academy days when Raoul stuck a sign on Headmaster Konami's back that read, *Iason Mink put this here*. Neither the Headmaster nor Iason had been amused. Yes, it was time to get even.

The penthouse was dark; evidently Raoul and Ambassador Anori were both already asleep. Iason slipped into the bedroom, surprised to find it empty and the bed still made.

A muffled laugh caught his attention and he froze, confused. It came from...the Observatory?



Katze approached him then, barefoot, attired only in his loose pajama bottoms. His adolescent charm was announced with a formidable yawn and glazed-over eyes that appeared to still be dreaming. "You're back early, Master." His voice was raspy from sleep. "Do you need anything?"

"Where's Raoul?"

"Um. Master. You...should know something," Katze hedged, running his hand through his hair as he tried to decide how best to tell him. He had been watching Raoul and Anori flirt for days and was wise enough to know their interactions were inappropriate, to say the least. "About Lord Am. And Ambassador Anori."

The Blondie studied him, and Katze's eyes told him everything.

"Impossible." Iason made for the spiral staircase that led to the Observatory, heart pounding. His temples pulsed as they only did when he was stressed. Each step he took made him a little angrier than the step before as the unmistakable sounds of lovemaking became more distinct.

Finally he reached the top of the stairs. The doorway was open, and there, in the hot tub, was Raoul with Ambassador Anori Khosi, engaged in coitus.

Anori was bent over the edge of the tub—Raoul's favorite position—and Raoul was taking him with shameless enthusiasm. Their bodies were glistening wet, the fire in the old-fashioned hearth casting everything in an erotic glow. Overhead, the night sky was clear, stars bright and glittering, the rising twin moons full and swollen orange-red like ripe forbidden fruit.

"You feel perfect," the Blondie proclaimed, running a hand down Anori's back and then wrapping the Ambassador's long dark hair around his arm.

"I want it harder," Anori hissed. "Harder, Raoul!"

Groaning, Raoul obliged him, thrusting violently.

"That's it!"

"Spread your legs more!" Raoul demanded, assisting this project with his knees and then his hands to spread him more. "Oh yes...you're magnificent!"

"Raoul," Anori moaned.

The handsome Alphazanian had never been so exquisitely taken in his life. Raoul's gorgeous thighs flexed with each thrust, hypnotizing him as he twisted around to watch his acquisition. It was all too much; closing his eyes, he began his ascent, lips parting, his gasps becoming urgent cries as the Blondie began grunting and growling.

As for Raoul, his lust for the exotic dignitary from Alpha Zen had clouded his reason and blinded him to what he was jeopardizing. He knew he was being unfaithful, but with Iason gone his needs were mounting, and Anori's seduction was intoxicating.

The Ambassador had taunted him by throwing off his robe and then making for the Observatory, naked, looking back over his shoulder and raising an eyebrow, his lip curling into a naughty smile. Raoul had followed like a predator after his young prey, knowing, as he disrobed and joined Anori in the hot tub, that the outcome could only be one thing: a thoroughly delicious fuck. All he could think about was sinking into Anori's depths. He never once seriously considered the consequences.

Iason felt as though his heart had stopped. He simply stood, watching the copulation of Raoul and Anori in complete disbelief, hurt and rage. Unable to speak or even move, he witnessed what no lover should ever see—his betrayal in progress.

The illicit union was now celebrated with the sex cries of the young lovers as they climaxed, almost in perfect unison. It was a sound that would forever haunt Lord Mink. Backing up, he crept down the stairs, trying to still his mind. A thousand thoughts whispered as the disturbing images of their congress replayed again and again. Iason felt as if his world had been cut into pieces.

And he felt rage. The wrath that only a betrayed lover feels—an all-consuming fury that demands retribution.

He would have his blood-vengeance.

With deliberate stealth, he crept to Anori's room, overriding the lock codes to gain access. Then...he waited.



"CAN I GET YOU A DRINK?" Riki offered with affected nonchalance, secretly thrilled with his new private bar.

"Wine would be lovely, my darling Riki."

Giving him a bewildered look at the new appellation "darling," the mongrel then proceeded to open his cabinets, searching for a bottle of wine.

"You do realize, pet, that you are only allowed *one* drink each evening, and only after sunset, just as before?"

"Yeah, yeah." Riki scowled. He was trying to play the host, and already Iason was thrusting reality into his little fantasy. "Here we go!" He pulled out a bottle of wine and examined its label. "Holy shit! This stuff is over twenty years old!"

He held up the bottle of White Moon.

"Isn't this your favorite?"

"A very fine wine. Not my favorite."

Riki frowned. "What's your favorite?"

"A wine that comes from Aristia. Red Emperor. Very difficult to come by and very expensive, so I save it for special occasions."

"Oh."

The mongrel's disappointment was so transparent that Iason quickly added, "White Moon is my third favorite, after Icarian Amber, also rather rare. A glass of White Moon would be heavenly, love."

Riki stared at the top of the bottle, perplexed. He had no idea what to do next.

"Don't tell me you've never opened a wine bottle before."

"Well, it might surprise you, but we don't get a lot of fancy White Icarian Emperor crap in the slums."

Amused, Iason rose from his chair and joined him at the bar. "As my pet, you need to know how to open a bottle of wine," he remarked, his voice low and silky-smooth. "Open that drawer there and retrieve the corkscrew."

The mongrel picked up the strange-looking instrument and grinned. "Bet this could do some damage somewhere."

Standing behind him, Iason took hold of his hands, guiding him. "You put the tip in, like this. Push here, and then firmly press these levers down—like this."

With a soft pop, the cork was extracted.

"Cool! I'm opening it next time."

Iason pressed his body up against Riki's, bending down to nuzzle his cheek and then gently kiss his neck.

Setting the bottle on the bar counter, the dark-skinned mongrel closed his eyes, his body quivering from Iason's mere touch. The Blondie wrapped his arms around him and then reached down to fondle him.

"Hold on." Riki grabbed his hand, pushing him away. "Not yet. I want to finish going through Omaki's box."

"As you wish," the Blondie whispered. "But don't make me wait too long. I'm anxious for you."

"You'll just have to wait, won't you? Now sit down, *pet!*" he commanded, putting his hands on his hips.

Amused with his domineering manner, Iason humored him, returning to his chair to wait, somewhat impatiently, for the evening's diversions to begin.

After pouring Iason a glass of wine and a bit of brandy for himself, Riki joined him on the sofa to explore the contents of the box.

First he pulled out the bondage cords he'd already discovered, showing them to Iason with a glint in his eyes. "You're getting tied up tonight."

The Blondie answered this with a slight smile and an arch of one brow, enjoying Riki's enthusiasm.

"And I'm using *this*," he asserted, holding up the stimulator he'd experimented with the previous day.

When Iason did not object, Riki added it to the bondage cords, grinning. Next he pulled out a flogger, its black leather tails tipped with tiny beads.

"How about this?" he asked, hopefully.

Iason gave him a look that conveyed his contempt for Riki having even suggested it. "Certainly not."

Annoyed, Riki tossed it aside. "I bet you'll use it on *me* though," he grumbled.

"Not if you obey me, pet," came the Blondie's sultry reply as he sipped his wine.

The mongrel rolled his eyes at this as though obedience wasn't even an option.

"Ooo! Nipple torture!" Riki held up two formidable looking clips, snapping them open and shut menacingly. "Please?"

"Very well," the Blondie agreed. "Just this once."

Thrilled to have his Master's consent for something else from Omaki's box of salacious toys, Riki put the clips aside on the foot table, adding to what he hoped would become a much larger pile.

Next he pulled out a large collar and leash. He raised an eyebrow, giving Iason a pointed look. "This looks way too big for me."

Iason shook his head at Omaki's sense of humor. "All right, pet."

Victorious, the mongrel added the collar to the pile.

"What about this?" Riki held up a rather innocuous-looking strap that he knew from his own experience would be much more painful than it appeared.

The Blondie nodded, uncrossing his legs. He was becoming a bit impatient, his arousal starting to mount. His pet added the strap to his pile, trying to hide his excitement.

"Oh! And this!"

Riki pulled out a long, wicked-looking Headmaster's cane.

"No, Riki."

As he attempted to toss it aside, Iason held out his hand. "Pet," he demanded, snapping his fingers. The mongrel relinquished the cane reluctantly, slamming it into the Blondie's waiting hand.

"Ohhh," Iason laughed brokenly. "Watch yourself, Riki."

"What are these?" His pet puzzled over several suede cords with beaded tassels.

"Hair ties. For braids."

Completely uninterested, Riki threw these over his shoulder, now discovering a skimpy leather outfit of straps and buckles, seductively open at critical areas. He jumped up, excited when he realized it was Blondie-sized.

"Put this on," he commanded, throwing it at Iason, who let it land untouched on his lap as he continued to languidly sip his wine.

"Enough. Let's get on with it, Riki."

Riki crossed his arms on his chest.

“Obey me or suffer the consequences, pet! When I tell you to do something, you’ll do it!”

With a slight laugh, the Blondie put down his glass and then undressed, examining the outfit with confusion until he discovered how it was to be worn. It was composed of leather straps fastened together with buckles and provided little coverage, revealing most of his skin as well as his genitals and buttocks. He silently cursed Omaki as he struggled to get it on, feeling ridiculous in it.

Riki was absolutely thrilled, finding Iason unbelievably sexy and pet-like. He grinned at his Master’s developing erection. “Now this.” He tossed him the collar with the leash.

“You do realize, Riki,” Iason warned as he donned the wanted prop, “that after your three nights everything will be back to normal.”

“Yeah, yeah,” Riki said dismissively. He was perfectly aware of this, which was why he planned to do everything he could while he had the chance. Pointing toward the bedroom, he issued his next command. “Get in there. *Now*.”

“As you wish, Master Riki.” Iason played along, slowly walking toward the bedroom, giving his pet an enticing view of his firm ass erotically framed with strips of leather.

Adjusting himself after a sudden carnal surge to his loins, Riki gathered his toys and followed the Blondie, closing the door behind them. Iason looked to him for instruction.

“Turn around,” Riki ordered. He then tied his wrists tightly behind his back. “Okay now. Sit on the edge of the bed.”

Iason obeyed, sucking in his breath a little when Riki attached the clips to his nipples. The mongrel observed his Master’s developing erection with dismay. “This is supposed to hurt—are you getting off on this?” he demanded, hand on hip, his other hand gripping the leash.

The Blondie laughed then, unable to keep a straight face when confronted with his pet’s indignation. “I am sorry, pet. It is not a response I can control.”

“*Master* Riki,” he corrected. “You’re *my* pet tonight.”

“Of course, Master Riki.” Iason tried his best to regain his composure, but found his pet so adorable he was ready to burst.

“Oh, you think this is funny? I know what. Let’s see how *you* like it when you’re so turned on you’re about to die but don’t get to come.”

Making good on his threat, he emptied some of Omaki’s oil onto his hand and then began applying it to Iason’s already matured erection, eliciting gasps of delight from the aroused Blondie.

“Feels good, doesn’t it?” Riki intensified his strokes, speeding up just enough to get Iason excited without actually pushing him past his critical point.

Iason closed his eyes, enjoying the incredibly erotic sensation of being sexually tormented by his pet. The cords ate into his flesh and his nipples were starting to burn, but Riki’s hand was relentless and pulled him where he wanted to be. He was almost there. Yes, just a little bit more....

Suddenly, Riki let go and simply stood there, staring down at him with his arms across his chest. “How does *that* feel?”

“Keep going,” Iason ordered, angry that Riki had brought him so close and then had intentionally stopped.

“A little frustrated, are we? You wouldn’t care too much for a pet ring then, I think? I won’t be taking orders from you this evening, *pet*, so get on your knees and bend over the bed.”

Riki picked up the strap and snapped it between his hands with a mischievous smile.

For a moment Iason hesitated, tempted to call off the evening and just pursue his own agenda with Riki. But he had promised his pet three nights. After everything Riki had been through, he deserved it, surely.

The Blondie found it a little awkward getting down on his knees with his wrists bound, and the mongrel did not help him, except to remove the clips from his nipples. When he was in position, he turned to see that Riki was pacing behind him, the strap hanging down by his side, swaying as the mongrel flicked it in anticipation of disciplining him.

In fact, Riki was enjoying the view so much that he was contemplating skipping the discipline and moving straight to the sex. The sight of Iason bound so submissively, his hair in soft tangles all over the bed and his ass positioned for discipline and

conquest, sent blood rushing to his manhood, which had risen up in happy celebration of his concupiscence.

But he wasn't about to seriously give up an opportunity to release a little pent-up rage and frustration. Iason had punished him plenty. And he had practically whipped Katze to death. So it was time for some payback.

"Pet," he announced, "you're being punished just because I fucking feel like it." With that, he unleashed the strap on the Blondie's bare backside with an immensely satisfying *SNAP!*

Iason did not cry out, but he flinched, a little surprised at how much it hurt. When the second strike hit him, his lips parted, and with the third strike, he issued a breathy sound—barely audible, but nevertheless discerned by the mongrel, who relished the acoustic fruits of his labor.

It wasn't long, however, before the Blondie put a halt to the strapping. "Enough, Riki."

Ignoring him at first, the mongrel continued to wield the strap, feeling it was unfair for Iason to have the option of cutting his punishment short when things got uncomfortable.

"Riki!"

Iason sounded a bit angry, his tone immediately staying his hand. He stopped, smiling at his handiwork. The Blondie's bottom and thighs were red with strap marks, and he felt certain he had produced a few welts.

"When I say stop, you'll stop!"

"Yeah, okay. Sheesh. Chill, already."

Riki picked up the phallic-like stimulator toy and, after turning it on to the warm self-lubricating vibration setting, pressed it up against Iason's rectum, gently probing and penetrating slightly.

"How's this?"

Iason closed his eyes, sighing. "Delightful. Keep going."

"Like this?" With gentle thrusts, Riki inserted the toy further into the Blondie, until finally it was almost fully inside.

"Mmmm."

"Let's try the G-wave setting," Riki suggested, playing with the panel on the end of the device.



Iason yelped and then cried out loudly.

"Oh shit," Riki muttered, fumbling to turn it off. "That was Shock."

"Riki!" Iason bellowed.

"It wasn't on purpose!"

"Take it out, *now*!"

"Wait! I promise you'll like it," Riki pleaded, managing to find the G-wave setting. "See?"

Relaxing, Iason suddenly moaned and then shuddered, overcome with pleasurable sensations.

"There we go," his pet whispered. "That feels good, right?"

"Yes," Iason conceded. "Riki."

"Yeah?"

"No more horseplay. I need to come, so do whatever you need to do, and then I'm taking you."

"Oh all right. You're no fun," the mongrel pouted, although he was so aroused he was close to staining his pants. He removed the vibrator and tossed it aside. "Lie on the bed, facedown."

"Help me up."

Riki assisted him onto the bed and then stripped off his own clothes and straddled him, pushing his legs together with his knees. It was a perfect position of power and control, Iason bound and prostrate under him. Riki rode him hard, although, not surprisingly, it was a rather short ride, for he was unable to contain himself once the Blondie began his intoxicating anal squeeze.

Iason was beside himself with lust, fully enjoying his pet's enthusiasm. He savored the feeling of being exposed and plundered as well as the sounds of Riki's pleasure. His passion was spiraling precipitously; he began to crave a good, hard conquest of his own, the feel of Riki's tight grip when taken violently. Without success, he tried to redirect his thoughts to other images.

"Oh fuck, I'm gonna come already," Riki lamented.

Then he ejaculated.

Unable to help himself, Iason began laughing.

"It's not bloody funny!"

Furious, Riki withdrew and began spanking him, smacking his punished rump as hard as he could, but the Blondie continued to

laugh, just as amused by his pet's anger and attempts to spank him as he was by his usual rush to the finish line.

"Untie me now, Riki," Iason ordered, finally managing to regain his composure. He was now quite anxious to tend to his own needs.

"I don't think this night should count," his pet muttered, as he released him from his cords.

It was all Iason could do to keep from leaping up immediately. He rose up slowly, and when he turned and Riki saw the look in his eyes, he frowned. He knew exactly what that look meant.

"But I'm still sore," he whimpered.

"Riki," Iason breathed, urgently pushing him facedown on the bed. "I want you." The Blondie laid on top of him and spread his legs apart forcefully with his knees.

Riki instinctively struggled, remembering how roughly Raoul had used him and anticipating the residual soreness.

"Please! Iason—"

Iason placed a hand over his mouth. "Forgive me, pet," he whispered. He then proceeded to take Riki far more violently than he should have.

Riki cried out, confused and hurt by his Master's actions. Iason was simply too aroused to give much thought to what he was doing. He was literally shaking. He relished his pet's hot, strangely lubricated fit and thrust into him urgently, almost angrily, feeling as though he couldn't get enough of him.

Then, a pathetic whimper escaped Riki's lips, the sound somehow reaching Iason's rational mind. He withdrew suddenly, pumping himself vigorously to release his lust on the mongrel's thighs. As his semen sprayed across the mongrel's golden-bronze skin, Iason realized his organ was stained with the blood of his pet. He looked at his hand: more blood.

"What have I done?"

Iason fell back onto the bed and rolled Riki on top of him to hold him close. The mongrel was trembling.

"I've hurt you. I'm so sorry, love."

Although Riki *had* been hurt, he was surprised that Iason had pulled out in the end and now seemed so remorseful.

The Blondie held him tightly, his hands shaking as he stroked his hair. “Forgive me. I don’t know what I was thinking.”

Riki swallowed. “It’s okay. I know what it’s like to really wanna fuck someone without thinking about what you’re doing.”

“Is that so?” Iason said with mock sternness, relieved at how quickly Riki seemed to recover. “And who might that have been?”

“You think I’d be stupid enough to tell you that?”

“Suppose I force you to tell me with a good, hard spanking?”

“Even you aren’t that sadistic,” the mongrel teased. “I can barely move as it is.”

“Don’t be so sure of yourself, pet. Perhaps I’ll just wait a few days to spank you. You already have one spanking in the bank—don’t think I’ve forgotten.”

“Oh yeah?” Riki smiled, nuzzling against his chest. This was the Iason he knew, the Master that would never hurt him—unless, of course, he was punishing him, in which case the Blondie knew exactly how to make him beg for mercy. Iason began stroking his hair and Riki yawned, finding himself very sleepy. Within just a few moments, both Master and pet were fast asleep.



WHEN RIKI FINALLY AWOKE, his bed was empty. The penthouse was abuzz with activity and noise. Creeping out of his room still naked, he dashed to the pool, thrilled to see that it was now full. He stared at the room in amazement—it had been transformed overnight into a garden paradise. Potted plants and trees were everywhere, as well as exotic, brightly-colored flowers of all kinds. Scores of landscapers worked noisily, putting in the finishing touches and arguing over the placement of some of the larger pots which, now planted, proved difficult to move. Riki looked up, marveling at the fantastic butterflies that fluttered everywhere—wings that danced in blues, greens, bright red and orange.

He shook his head, laughing. Iason had said only that the landscapers would “bring plants” and fill up the pond, not create an

opulent garden fit for an emperor. Riki then remembered the pond and started towards the balcony.

“Close the door or they’ll get out,” one man scolded, pointing up at the butterflies, and smirking a little at the mongrel’s nakedness.

Riki shut the door behind him and then, ignoring the stares and snorting laughs of the landscapers, rushed to the balcony, anxious to see if the second pool and Iason’s pond had been filled.

When he opened the door, he gasped, completely overwhelmed.

He had never seen a garden more beautiful in his life. Towering trees with weeping boughs swayed majestically, pink and claret blossoms whirling hypnotically in the breeze. Against the penthouse, arbors had been secured, one with climbing vines, its magnificent blossoms crawling up on elegant trails of vibrant green.

The air was scented with lavender and jasmine; myriad flowers in stone and porcelain pots graced the garden with brightly colored blooms, open but for the aromatic night-waking flowers that emerged only under the pale light of the twin moons.

A dwarf orange tree hung with ripe fruit was situated near the stone bench, which was now softened with thick, inviting cushions. From the door to the pool and the bench, and then branching off to the balcony’s ledge, a path of smooth russet-brown marble had been laid down. Incredibly, moss—transplanted on a bed of rich soil—now covered a shaded stretch of the balcony from the path’s edge to the ledge, a large boulder situated in the middle of its lush jade carpet. The illusion was stunning, as though the moss was growing out of the balcony floor.

Bright indigo and yellow finches jealously guarded the gurgling fountains scattered throughout the garden. The pond was filled with colorful koi and striped kruska tiger-fish, immense crimson lotus flowers peeking up from the water’s tranquil surface. In the boughs of an Aristian pear tree a sharlingale sang, as enamored of his newfound sanctuary as was the gaping pet of Iason Mink.

The pool was now full, ornamented with wayward weeping blossoms of pink and cherry-wine, gentle boats of fragile beauty that floated on ripples of cool aquamarine. Throughout the garden chimes tinkled soothingly, caressed by the wind’s touch.

Eagerly, Riki started toward the pool, startled when he felt a sharp smack on his bottom.

“Get dressed,” Iason scolded. “Didn’t you see the landscapers?”

“You scared the hell out of me!” Riki cried, rubbing his ass.

“You need to close the door behind you. You’ve just let out one of the dragontails.” Iason pointed to a vivid blue butterfly that had made his escape, now fortuitously distracted by the lavender bush, thus allowing the Blondie to capture him.

“Can I hold it?”

“Hold out your hand.”

Carefully transferring the desperately struggling butterfly to his hands, the Blondie smiled at the delight on his pet’s face.

“It tickles,” he giggled, squealing as the tiny captive attempted to flee his new prison.

“Take it back inside. And be more careful from now on. Those are extremely rare.”

Riki obeyed, dutifully closing the door behind him.

“So, what do you think?” Iason watched him with glistening eyes, knowing full well what his pet thought, having watched him standing transfixed, and completely naked, on the balcony for some minutes before he had interrupted his reverie with a little spank.

“It’s incredible, Iason,” he marveled. “I’ve never seen anything like it. How in the world did you do it so fast?”

“I’ve no patience for dragging something out that can be done right away,” the Blondie answered, tugging on his gloves. “The other landscapers have already left; I hired forty.”

Riki gazed longingly toward the pool. “Can I go swimming now?”

“Not yet. Get dressed. We’re going out.”

“Where are we going?” The mongrel stared at Iason’s attire, curious. He was dressed to the hilt in one of his best “Lord Mink” outfits—this time a crimson skin-tight bodysuit with a white cape, and white, red-trimmed boots. He noticed the Blondie’s taming stick then, which reminded him to be careful when he addressed Iason in public.

“I’ll tell you on the way. Get moving, pet.” Iason smacked him again, this time a little harder, though with a gloved hand.

"But I haven't had any breakfast," the mongrel whined.

"You can eat on the way. And it's already lunchtime. *Move.*"

Riki didn't need any additional prompting. Despite his protest, he was actually anxious to get out of the penthouse. He hurried to his room, skipping past the landscapers, but this time—now that he was followed closely by Iason—there was no laughing at his nudity.

Dressing quickly after freshening up in the sink, the mongrel went looking for Iason and peeked into Enyu's room as he walked by. The Xeronian was masturbating, as usual, watching a holograph of a Blondie performing fellatio on a pet—a forbidden image that Jupiter had banned but which continued to be programmed into most projectors without her knowledge.

"Meow," Riki teased, sticking his head into the room. "Hey, cat-boy. Jerking off again, I see. You know, your dick might fall off one of these days."

Too aroused to even respond to his taunts, Enyu glared back, grunting through clenched teeth.

"I bet you want me to suck you, huh?" Riki tormented him by flicking his tongue suggestively at him.

"Ohhh," Enyu groaned, suddenly ejaculating, his semen shooting up like a rocket.

Laughing hysterically at Enyu's complete lack of control, Riki left the Xeronian to his pre-interval agony. He hurried toward the great hall, but when he saw Iason waiting for him with his chains, he stopped in his tracks. Master and pet stared at one another for a long, tension-filled moment.

"Come here," Iason commanded firmly, wondering if Riki would wear the chains without protest.

Riki was about to object when Enyu came into the hall, furious.

"Just wait until tomorrow, mongrel. I'll fuck you until you bleed," he snarled, before he saw that their Master was standing right there.

Wisely refraining from replying, Riki looked to the Blondie for his response to this threat on his chastity.

Setting the chains onto the bar counter, Iason whipped out his taming stick and, before Enyu could even respond, the Blondie pushed him up against the wall, pulling up his garment.

"You will *never* touch Riki without my permission, Enyu, nor make such promises," Iason admonished. The reprimand was underscored by a series of hard strikes to his thighs, punishing blows that were all the more painful on the Xeronian's sore flesh. His strange squawks echoed in the great hall, rousing Katze from his opiate-induced slumber and drawing Odi from the balcony to one of the hall pillars, where he watched with dark fascination. It was over fairly quickly; afterwards Enyu simply fell to the floor, howling, much to Riki's complete satisfaction.

Iason slid the taming stick back into the sheath and then picked up the chains, looking at Riki threateningly. With a whimpering Enyu kneeling on the floor watching him jealously, the mongrel proudly held out his wrists to be chained, much to his Master's relief and pleasure.

Enyu had never seen a pet in gold-plated pet cuffs and chains before, and these were also engraved with Iason's initials. No wonder the mongrel looked so proud to wear them—he certainly would have been. And hadn't the Blondie promised to get him a wardrobe? He was in desperate need of a change of clothes, yet Lord Mink seemed to have forgotten all about him. Enyu rubbed his nose, frowning, feeling keenly the injustice of his punishment. His only comfort was the knowledge that by the following day, everything would be different. Neither Master nor pet would be able to resist him then.

"Are you going out?" Odi asked.

"Yes. I won't need an escort."

Odi was visibly unhappy with this answer. "Someone needs to go with you. It defeats the whole purpose if you won't let us guard you."

"I'm more concerned about the security of the penthouse. And I'm armed," Iason replied, pulling back his cape to reveal a new laser, fastened via a tight leather garter to his thigh.

Shaking his head, Odi returned to the balcony, muttering to himself as he lit up another smoke.

"Can I see that?" Riki asked excitedly, pointing to Iason's laser.

"Later, pet," Iason replied, securing the Master cuff to his wrist that was attached to Riki's neck chain.

"I never got breakfast," the mongrel complained.

"Tai!" Iason called out.

Immediately, a bright-eyed male of medium-height with dark, reddish hair rushed into the hall, carrying a meal box.

"This is our new cook," the Blondie said casually.

"Your lunch, Sir Riki," Tai said, bowing to him.

Speechless, Riki took the meal box, feeling a little overwhelmed by the sheer number of changes and new faces at the penthouse.

Noting his surprise, Iason nodded. "With Enyu and the new bodyguards, it is too much responsibility for one attendant to deal with meal preparation, and Juthian won't know what to do. Tai is very good. He was the head chef for Prince Ruu of Aristia."

Tai beamed at Iason's praise, bowing again. Riki was mesmerized by his carnelian gold-flecked eyes. He had heard of Aristians, of course—a gentle people scattered among the countless exotic islands of the green Aristian sea, known throughout the galaxy for their excellent seamanship, fine wines, delectable cuisine, exotic pets and truly exceptional art.

Riki was itching to ask Iason more about Tai, the gardens and all the new changes at the penthouse, but he waited until they were alone in the elevator before assaulting him with questions.

"Where are we going? When did you hire that Aristian guy? Have you been to Aristia?"

"We are going to Tanagura Medical. I hired Tai yesterday, and yes, I've been to Aristia, twice."

"We're going to see Daryl?" Riki cried.

"No," Iason began, and then reconsidered. "Yes, we might stop by while we're there. But we're going to Tanagura Reconstruction to do something about your brand-mark."

Riki frowned. "What are you going to do?"

"Remove it."

"How can you do that—they'd have to cut off my skin!"

"I'm having a signature plate put in."

"What the hell is that?"

"It will be grafted onto the skin. And you won't feel a thing."

The mongrel relaxed a bit at this. "What's it like on Aristia?"



"Indescribable. I'll take you there one day."

"You will?" Excited, Riki snuggled closer to him, chains jangling a bit as he moved.

Iason smiled, eyes soft and gentle. "Would you like that, pet?"

"Fuck yeah. I've never been off Amoi. Is he living with us? Tai?"

"Yes."

"Then we have three bodyguards, cat-boy, and Tai—plus the new attendant, Juthian, right?"

"Another bodyguard will be joining us soon."

"It's a good thing you opened up that guest wing. Now you'll only have...*three* rooms left there, and one of them you're being all weird and mysterious about," Riki probed.

The Blondie made no reply, averting his gaze.

"What's in that room?" his pet pressed, boldly.

"Not open for discussion, Riki," Iason sighed.

The mongrel was silent for a moment. "I need a smoke," he groaned, finally.

"Not in the car, Riki."

"What! Can't I smoke real fast right now then?"

The elevator door opened on the ground floor, Iason's vehicle just steps away.

"No."

"Iason!"

The Blondie turned and took hold of his chin. "No, pet. When I say no, don't argue with me."

Sulking, Riki made no reply, feeling decidedly grumpy as he trudged behind Iason.

"You have no idea what it feels like not to be able to smoke," he muttered, crawling into the vehicle first from Iason's side. His chains clanked as he climbed awkwardly over the driver's seat, his meal box pressed to his chest.

"Perhaps I am smart enough not to adopt a vice like smoking."

"Hah! I'd like to see you go one day without your precious wine. And you don't think taking your own pet is a vice?"

Smiling at his pet's valid point, Iason slid into his seat, turning to him with mock sternness, although Riki did not recognize it as such.

"Do I need to turn you over my knee right now and tame you, pet?" he threatened, slamming his door shut.

"No," Riki grumbled, staring down at his meal box. He became distracted by its intricate ornamentation, an exotic design of black and periwinkle blue. "This is really fancy. Hey, do you think Tai stole it from that one prince?"

Laughing, Iason pulled Riki close to him by his neck chain and then kissed him gently.

"Pet," he whispered, affectionately.

"You're giving me another hard-on," the mongrel announced.

Releasing him with a chuckle, Iason then started up the vehicle and pulled out of the Tower parking lot.

As soon as Riki opened the meal box, he discovered firsthand why Aristians were known for their cuisine: he had never tasted anything more delicious in his life than the little lunch Tai had prepared for him, though he had no idea what it was. Feeling sated and overjoyed to be out of the penthouse, the mongrel was prepared to enjoy his afternoon with his Blondie Master.

When they arrived at Tanagura Medical, Iason parked in front of the entrance in an area clearly marked *No Parking*.

"Hey. You can't park here," Riki remarked.

The Blondie gave a slight laugh as he exited the vehicle. Riki scrambled after him.

They were greeted as soon as they entered the hospital. "Good afternoon, Lord Mink. What an honor," the receptionist said, bowing.

Iason raised a hand to acknowledge the countless greetings directed his way, nodding slightly at the receptionist. Riki stared in disbelief as they passed a statue that was erected near the front desk: it was a very favorable likeness of his Master, the inscription reading, "In honor of our patron Lord Iason Mink, Tanagura's most generous benefactor."

As soon as they were alone in the elevator, Riki nearly exploded. "They have a bleeding *statue* of you in the lobby! What did you do, build this hospital?"

"Oh, no. Only the children's wing."

"You built an entire wing?"

"I funded it."

Riki shook his head, smiling. "You surprise me sometimes."

The elevator door opened to the Reconstruction wing, and Riki was immediately mesmerized by the Blondie with a bionic arm who greeted them, standing as if he had been waiting for their arrival.

"Iason," the Blondie nodded, smiling.

"Heiku."

"Everything's ready. This way."

Iason and his pet followed the towering Blondie to a room with a sheet-covered examining table.

"He needs to remove his pants and lie facedown on the table," Heiku instructed.

"Riki." Iason nudged him when the mongrel remained motionless.

The Blondie removed the cuff from his own arm as Riki slowly stripped and then climbed onto the table.

Heiku positioned a screen on his upper back that blocked his view of what was going on. Riki scowled, looking suspiciously at the physician when he picked up a long needle.

"A little stick," Heiku warned, injecting the numbing medication into the mongrel's lower back.

"Ow! Fuck!"

Both Blondies laughed a little at him.

"Lie still," Heiku commanded. "Here it is," he announced. He held up the membrane-thin flexible golden plate on which the initials I.M. were boldly engraved in elegant script.

Riki strained to see the plate but could only discern that it was gold. He was distracted by Heiku's hand. His bionic fingers moved as gracefully as his natural hand. The mongrel liked that Heiku had opted not to cover his mechanics with a skin graft; he found the Blondie's every move fascinating.

Iason nodded his approval. "Perfect." He pointed to the skin-like material that edged the plate and covered its bottom. "What is this?"

"Synthetic skin. This is what grafts to his skin."

"Intriguing."

"Are you sure you want to remove the brand first? The plate will cover the initials."

"Remove them," Iason replied, without hesitation. Even if Raoul's initials were covered, he would know they were there.

The procedure took about an hour, and when it was finished, Riki was permanently marked as the pet of Iason Mink—although the mongrel did not yet know that the plate had been personalized with his Master's initials. Heiku applied a bandage, cautioning Iason to clean the graft carefully each day. "Just use a dry cloth for the plate, though," he added.

As they left Reconstruction, Riki tugged on Iason's sleeve.

"Yes, pet?" Iason whispered, bending down.

"Can we go see Daryl?" he whispered back.

"For a few minutes," Iason conceded.

"Iason," Riki asked again, after a moment.

"Yes?"

"Can I have a bionic arm?"

At this, the Blondie threw back his head and laughed, a lovely, musical sound that turned heads.

"I'm serious!"

"If you lose your arm, then you may have one," Iason promised.

"Can't you just have it removed?" Riki pouted.

"Don't be silly, pet. I don't want any part of your body replaced with a prosthesis unless it's absolutely necessary." The Blondie tugged on his neck chain, urging him closer.

"If I had a bionic dick, I could really fuck you good."

"Hush," Iason cautioned, though he was unable to suppress a slight smile.

They were approaching Daryl's wing, and Iason tapped on his shoulder, pointing to his taming stick as a reminder of the behavior he expected from him.

Riki sighed but otherwise remained quiet.

The blue-haired lady descended on them as they entered the ward.

"Visiting hours are not until seven this evening," she announced with authority, blocking their path. She studied Iason, perplexed, trying to place his face.

"Forgive our intrusion," Iason purred, his voice smooth as silk.

"But we were here on other business, and I thought I might come to

see how my attendant is doing. He has been in your care these past few days.”

Riki rolled his eyes at Iason’s sudden charm, his voice and demeanor obviously designed to beguile the blue-haired lady into admitting him.

A series of expressions crossed the woman’s face in rapid succession, from surprise at his flirtation, to admiration of his physical beauty, to confusion, recognition and finally—horror.

“Lord...Mink?” she asked, her voice barely audible.

“At your service,” he replied with a slight bow, his sensuality and intense, intelligent gaze melting her icy reception.

She stared at him, visibly softening, and then smiled.

“Forgive me, I—yes of course, your attendant is just this way, he is doing fine and will be released tomorrow, barring unforeseen complications.”

The blue-haired lady, having heard about the great Iason Mink most of her life, had been content to snort at every mention of his name, but she had never met the beautiful Blondie before, and he had completely enchanted her with his intoxicatingly seductive manner. She felt flattered and admired—which was exactly what Iason had hoped to achieve. In a single instant, her perception of Tanagura’s famous Blondie was irrevocably altered; from that point on in her life, she would proudly boast of how Iason Mink had been so taken by her that she felt he might have pursued her, if only she had been a Blondie, and many a conversation would be peppered with an insertion of Iason Mink as the topic, her own view being that he was the most magnificent, benevolent, charming Blondie on Amoi, after which she would advance her theory on Iason’s secret infatuation with her charms.

Riki followed his Master, shaking his head. No wonder Iason was so powerful—he could manipulate anyone into conforming to his will. Had he known exactly how acidic the blue-haired lady’s manner was typically, he would have been even more impressed.

Iason, upon apprehending a Blondie acquaintance in the hall near Daryl’s room, uncuffed Riki to allow him to visit Daryl alone.

The eunuch smiled as he entered the room. “Riki.”

“Hey. You’re still alive.”

“As are you.”

They stared at each other for a moment, memories of the horrible night of Riki’s abduction sobering both of them.

“Hey. Thanks for...trying to save me.”

“I didn’t know what to do,” Daryl apologized. “I should have done something different.”

Riki grinned. “You should have seen the look on Raoul’s face when you bit his ear.”

“Oh yeah?” Daryl smiled.

“We have bodyguards now. Three—and another one is supposed to come. *And* we have a chef. And...did Katze tell you about Enyu?”

“You mean cat-boy?” Daryl guessed. “He told me.”

“Well, I got to fuck him yesterday, the little brat. Oh! Iason opened the guest wing! And there are pools, two pools that he filled, and a pond, and the butterflies but you have to keep the door closed, and about a million landscapers, and gardens with fountains...and I have a new room with a holograph projector where they copulate, the pets I mean, and a billiard room. And a bar and kitchen. And on the tapestry in my room, it has pets fucking. Plus I got to open Omaki’s box from the Taming Tower and Iason is letting me do stuff for two more nights. Last night I tied him up and did all sorts of naughty things to him. I shocked him accidentally with this one thing and he got really pissed off.”

Daryl nodded, feeling a little lost with the mongrel’s soliloquy. He’d only been gone for a couple of days, and the penthouse already sounded like a completely different place.

He had no idea what Riki had just tried to tell him, but he couldn’t believe Iason had finally opened the mysterious guest wing. Even Katze wouldn’t tell him about that. Although Iason had housekeeping come to keep the rooms in order, he always instructed Daryl to wait in his room, and so he had never even managed to get a glimpse of the locked wing.

“Cat-boy got strapped and then spanked raw. And then tamed again this morning. It was awesome,” Riki proclaimed.

“How’s Katze?”

“He’s doing okay. It was pretty rough, though. He was still in bed when I left.”

“What?” Daryl asked, confused. “What was rough?”

“What do you think? His whipping last night. Didn’t you think that might be a little rough?”

Daryl stared back at him horrified. “His...*whipping*? But he was here last night—he didn’t say anything about it!”

Riki then realized his error. “Oh. I guess he didn’t want you to know about it yet.”

For the first time, Daryl felt truly angry with Katze, but his heart bled for him, too, as he imagined what his lover had gone through. “Why didn’t he tell me?” he demanded, incensed.

“I’m sure he just didn’t want you to worry.”

“Was it very bad, Riki?”

“Well...yeah, Daryl. It was bad—but he was brave about it, and he’ll be okay.”

Blinking back stinging tears, the grey-eyed youth fell silent, imagining Katze’s pain.

“You’re coming home tomorrow, right?” Riki asked softly.

Daryl nodded.

“Hey! That asshole boyfriend of yours fucking beat me with the taming stick!”

“He told me. I’m sure you deserved it.”

“What! Everyone’s turning against me now.”

Iason entered the room. “Let’s go, Riki,” he ordered, and then nodded at Daryl. “You’re feeling better?”

“Yes. Thank you, Master.”

The Blondie fastened the Master cuff to his arm. “We’ll see you back at the penthouse tomorrow, then.”

“Yes, Sir.”

With that the Blondie turned to leave and Riki followed, giving Daryl a little salute as he left. He was a bit surprised that Iason hadn’t spent more than a few seconds talking to Daryl. The blue-haired lady gifted Iason with a warm goodbye as they left the ward, which the Blondie answered with an amused smile.

As soon as they reached the elevator, Riki confronted him.

"You hardly said anything to Daryl. Don't you care about him?"

"His condition is stable. What else is there to inquire about?"

Iason examined his white gloves impassively.

Riki shook his head, exasperated. "He was hurt because he tried to save me."

"And for that he's to be rewarded, but this hardly seemed the appropriate time or place."

Placated by this, the mongrel now sighed. "My back hurts. Are we going home now?"

"Not yet, pet."

"Where are we going *now*?" Riki demanded.

The Blondie leaned against the wall of the elevator, arms crossed on his chest. "To Midas. To see Omaki Ghan."



IASON APPROACHED THE TAMING TOWER from the ground, despite Riki's incessant begging to move into airspace. Iason was inflexible; he knew that after his last flight, which had exceeded protocol speed restrictions, Jupiter had no doubt tagged his vehicle for immediate notification upon airspace re-entry.

He was in no mood to coddle Jupiter and explain why he was heading back to Midas. It was no concern of hers, and he resented her constant intrusions in his private life. Iason could still play Jupiter, but he was finding it increasingly difficult to perform under her unblinking scrutiny.

As they drew closer to the Taming Tower, Riki fell silent, staring out the window at the familiar sights. When Raoul had taken him to Midas, he had not been in a state to appreciate that he had returned to his old haunts for the first time in over two years. Now he gazed at the pleasure city through new eyes, feeling strangely removed, almost contemptuous of its seedy, carnival-like atmosphere. He had come a long way in his thinking; now he was the pampered pet of Tanagura's Syndicate Head, living in a posh penthouse in Eos. Part of him couldn't help but be a little proud. Iason's exotic hybrid



hover-hugger drew admiring stares—some of recognition—and Riki almost wished the windows were not darkened so that he could be seen with the famous Blondie.

At the Taming Tower they pulled into reserved parking. Once again Iason parked wherever he chose, much to Riki's amusement. The mongrel instinctively shuddered, however, as they entered the Tower, remembering his unpleasant hours there with Raoul. Iason pulled him close as they walked, as if sensing his discomfort.

They reached Omaki's private chambers in a matter of minutes; Iason seemed to know exactly where he was going. Upon their entry, Lord Ghan greeted them with a slight bow, having viewed their arrival from his terminal.

"What a pleasure, Iason. I see you've brought your famous pet."

"I've come for the footage, Omaki," came the Blondie's rather unfriendly reply.

"Ah, business before pleasure, is it? Very well. I'll need your retinal signature."

"You'll hand over that footage, or I'll slit your belly and pull your intestines out onto your chest," Iason replied, coldly. "Your days of extracting credits from me are over."

Riki raised his eyebrows at his Master's threat, watching Omaki to see what he would do.

"Ooo, you're sexy when you're angry, Iason. You came all the way over here just to threaten me? I was only teasing, you know," Omaki replied, with a little smile.

"The footage, Omaki."

"Aki!"

Lord Ghan summoned his boy-pet, who walked uncertainly into the room, carrying a small envelope. Upon seeing Iason, he froze, staring up at him in fear. This was the great Iason Mink, the Blondie his Master had told him was coming to spank him for refusing to eat his vegetables.

"Give him the envelope, Aki," Omaki prompted, amused with the boy's reaction.

With trembling fingers, Aki reached out to offer the package, unable to move any closer.

Iason reached down and took it, smiling at the boy. "Are you afraid of me?"

"No," Aki whispered, looking back at his Master for help.

"Come sit on my lap, Aki. I've decided you're to be forgiven. No punishment today." Omaki patted his thighs, and Aki ran to him, grinning when the Blondie lifted him up onto his lap.

"That's what you've come for," Omaki confirmed, nodding to the envelope. "So, what do you think of my Aki?" The Blondie whispered something in the boy's ear, eliciting a giggle.

"You are aware that a pet must be at least twelve years of age?"

"Are you lecturing me on acceptable pet etiquette?" Omaki eyed Riki suggestively. "As if this mongrel wasn't enough, I've heard you've acquired a Xeronian."

"Yes." Iason was curt as he examined the envelope. He opened it, finding a small computer disc inside.

"Mmmm. I've always wanted one of those. I've heard they rut. Have they paired yet, your two pets?"

Iason ignored his question, one hand on his hip. "You haven't touched him, I hope?" he demanded, nodding to Aki.

"Funny you should ask. I have been tempted—quite tempted I must confess. But I have restricted myself to just a taste here and there. Nothing the boy minds, I assure you. Would you like to be the first?" Here Omaki put his hand on Aki's thigh suggestively, his eyes glittering as he watched Iason's reaction.

"I should report you to Jupiter. You touch that boy and I *will*, mark my words."

"Calm down. What do you take me for?" Omaki laughed. "You never did have much of a sense of humor, Iason. I'm only ensuring that my pet is trained properly. I've lost my taste for Academy pets—as have you, it seems." The Blondie nodded toward Riki, giving Iason a pointed look.

"Is he registered as a pet?"

"Not precisely. The system rejected the registration. Which reminds me, how did you manage to register your mongrel?"

"I haven't time to explain it to you. I'd better never hear another word of this," Iason said, holding up the envelope threateningly.

Then he abruptly turned and left.

"You didn't say anything about my box," Omaki called after them. "Didn't you like it? I'm quite certain not *everything* in it was stolen."

"He wants a Xeronian," Riki whispered as they took the elevator down to the ground floor. "Why don't you give him cat-boy?"

"It's not that simple, Riki," the Blondie replied, although it did seem like the perfect match. Still, he couldn't just give Jupiter's pet away...not without a good reason.

"You want to keep him," the mongrel accused, pouting.

Iason smiled. "Is my pet jealous again?" he pulled Riki close by his neck chain, bending down to kiss him.

"A little," Riki confessed.

The elevator door opened and they quickly moved apart. As they exited the Tower, Iason was recognized by a senator from Urus, who stopped him to discuss the upcoming trade conference.

Bored, Riki longed to smoke but knew better than to do so in public without his Master's permission. He leaned against the wall, staring out at the busy square. The Taming Tower was situated at the very hub of the notorious E-zone. The streets were teeming with mongrels, Blondies, dignitaries, and attendants—everyone that had business in Midas or who came to the city for pleasure.

Suddenly, his heart stopped. There, not so far away, was Guy. Riki looked again to be sure; yes, it was definitely his old pairing partner, his hair pulled back in his signature ponytail, his distinctive laugh rising above the crowds. He was with someone—an attractive, dark-haired mongrel. They had their arms around each other and were walking directly towards him.

Panicking, Riki moved close to his Master to hide from Guy's view. Iason, thinking that his pet simply wanted his attention, placed a hand on his shoulder. He was thrilled with his pet's endearing behavior, especially in front of the Urusian senator.

Riki peeked past Iason's cloak and saw that he had escaped detection. Guy had moved on down the street, seeming very friendly with his new partner.

All at once, it was as though Riki's world crumbled. Everything came flooding back—his life as leader of Bison, the gang, Guy:

everything that he had been before he became the pet of Iason Mink. It was not so much that he was jealous of Guy's new love—although admittedly it gave him a little sting—it was the sudden realization that he had become someone Guy would detest. He was scum. He was a Blondie's pet, and worse, he had come to enjoy it. Riki barely noticed when the other Elite left. Iason led him to the car and he climbed in, shaking, trying to get his emotions under control.

At first Iason was oblivious to his state, preoccupied with the senator's remarks, particularly the rumor circulating regarding a shipment of female captives from Aristia. But once they were on the road back to Tanagura, he looked over at Riki and immediately saw that something was wrong.

"What is it, pet?"

Riki shook his head, staring out the window.

Iason fell silent, trying to discern why his pet was sulking. "Are you upset about Enyu?"

The mongrel gave him an odd look, as though completely puzzled by his question. "Fuck no," he answered.

For a while they rode in silence. The Blondie continually turned to look at his pet, starting to become a little perplexed. The look on Riki's face was something he had not seen in a long time. Not since his early taming days.

It was a look of dark rebellion.

"Riki," Iason began again, his voice a little sharper. "What's on your mind?"

"My thoughts are my own," the mongrel snapped, gifting him with another foul look.

Surprised, and a little hurt, Iason continue to drive, piecing together the events of their trip in an attempt to determine exactly what had happened. Riki had seemed fine when they went to visit Omaki Ghan. Even afterwards, though Riki had admitted being jealous, he had moved close to him while they were standing on the street. It made no sense.

But there was no denying that something was very wrong now.

Deciding that perhaps his pet needed some space, Iason opted to let the matter rest. Perhaps when they returned to the penthouse,

Riki's mood would improve. His hopes were dashed when, upon being released from his chains, Riki immediately made for his room without a backward glance. Iason followed, starting to feel a little angry. When he realized that the mongrel had locked the door, his heart began pounding. Overriding the lock codes, he entered, finding Riki at the bar, pouring himself a drink.

"You know perfectly well you are not allowed to drink before sunset, pet."

The mongrel made no reply, but his eyes gleamed with unmistakable hostility.

"Let's have it. What's going on, Riki?"

"Just leave me alone."

"I see. Are you forfeiting your night with me?"

"Yes."

The Blondie walked toward him slowly, trying to control his rising anger. He removed his gloves, tossing them aside. "And what of *my* needs, my desires?"

Riki shrugged, eyes averted.

Iason moved behind him and ran his hands down his body, kissing his throat. His pet remained unresponsive, although his awakening erection betrayed his interest.

"Do you think you can resist me, Riki?"

Closing his eyes, the mongrel swallowed, trying desperately not to respond. But he was trembling, his skin burning from the Blondie's mere touch. Years of sexual intimacy made his body quiver whenever Iason was near; much as he tried to prevent it, Riki could not help but respond to his Master. He expelled a held breath, gripping onto the bar counter as though this would somehow help him resist Iason's advances.

The Blondie reached under his shirt and found a nipple, squeezing it in just the manner he knew Riki loved as he fondled him with his other hand.

"Don't fight it, pet," he whispered.

Riki remained impassive, although he grew rigid and hot in his Master's experienced hands. Suddenly Iason withdrew his hand, yanking down his pants and making him step out of them. He

positioned himself behind him again, pushing his legs apart with his knees and forcing Riki to widen his stance.

“What, you think you can hold back?” Iason whispered again, nibbling on his ear. “You don’t want me to hear you cry out, is that it? You want to deny me that pleasure?”

Riki could feel his Master’s erection between his legs, rubbing against him tauntingly. He held his breath, steeling himself for the pain of penetration.

Then, unexpectedly, the Blondie crouched down. He spread him with his delicate fingers and proceeded to pleasure him with his tongue, flicking and penetrating in an alternating pattern—just the way he knew Riki wanted it.

Clenching his teeth, Riki squeezed his eyes shut, his palms now pressed hard on the bar counter as he tried not to vocalize his delight. When Iason reached around and continued stroking him, it was too much. Despite his resolve not to enjoy it, he groaned, overcome with pleasure.

“That’s it,” Iason encouraged, briefly stopping his ministrations. “Don’t hold back now.”

As Iason continued pleasuring him, Riki was, in the end, unable to stop himself from crying out his release—it was simply too exquisite, too perfect, too indescribably sweet. He fell forward onto the bar counter, feeling defeated and humiliated.

The Blondie was immediately behind him again, lying over him and nuzzling against his cheek. “That was beautiful, Riki. Don’t ever deny me your passion.”

But the mongrel did not reply, choking back tears of shame.

## A Taste of Freedom

“NOW,” IASON WHISPERED, “stay just like that, love.”

Riki still lay collapsed over the bar counter, legs wide apart, eyes shut tight with shame. With patient fingers, the Blondie lubricated himself with his pet’s semen and then slowly slid into him, anxious for release but feeling that Riki needed him to be gentle.

The mongrel responded to his entrance with a little sigh, angry with himself for welcoming his advances. He forced himself to remain still, though what he really wanted was to buck backwards and invite deeper penetration.

Iason shuddered, sliding his hands under Riki’s shirt and then running them down his muscular back to his waist. He grabbed hold of his hips, pulling back forcefully as he began thrusting. His pet lay limply, completely unresponsive, which the Blondie found puzzling. Riki’s odd behavior was distracting; so, to elicit some sort of reaction, Iason gave him a hard smack on the ass.

“Hey!” Riki objected, startled. “Fucking asshole!”

This provided just the additional stimulation Iason needed; changing gears, he suddenly became rough, thrusting forcefully.

“I’ve had it with your sulking,” he scolded. “Why don’t you tell me what’s on your mind?”

“Get your fucking dick out of my ass first,” Riki snapped back.

“Ohhh,” Iason breathed brokenly, “not until I’m finished fucking you with it.”

Riki couldn’t help but smile at his Master’s phrasing and the insertion of a vulgarity into his usually more elegant speech. “Then hurry up and come already.”

Iason responded to this by slowing down, deliberately drawing out the sex. "I'll come when I'm ready to come. Maybe I'll just take you all night. Would you like that?"

"Humph," Riki snorted.

"I take that as a challenge. Tonight, pet, we're going to review some basic principles of obedience. I'm going to take you over and over, until you fully submit to me."

"Yeah, right," Riki muttered.

"What, do you doubt me?" Now Iason laughed. "I assure you, pet, I have been quite restrained with you. Tonight, you'll find out how much more demanding I can be."

The mongrel, who already felt raw, shivered a little at this threat. He was kicking himself for forfeiting his night with Iason. Now the night would be under the Blondie's terms, and he knew his Master well enough to know he didn't make idle threats.

Iason increased his speed again, savoring the warm wetness of his pet's anal grip. A night of unrestrained coital pleasure was exactly what he needed—and what Riki needed, as well.

Before he could stop himself, Riki uttered a little moan, which gave Iason just the right amount of stimulation to push him past his critical point. He closed his eyes, letting the pleasure wash over him as he climaxed. Then he withdrew, his departure eliciting another small moan—this time of pain—from the mongrel.

"The night's only begun, pet," Iason warned, his voice still thick with sex.

Riki stood up, reaching around to tug at his bandage. "This fucking thing is stinging like hell."

"Leave it on."

Ignoring him, Riki ripped it off, staring at the plate in surprise. "What the...what the hell? These are *your* bleeding initials!"

"Why did you just disobey me?" Iason demanded, giving him another hard smack on his rump.

"Ow! Why did *you* put this thing on me? And what's it doing? It feels like it's melting into my skin!"

"It's starting to dissolve. Your skin will start to absorb it until it becomes a permanent part of your body."



Riki frowned, straining and twisting around to examine the brand. "What the fuck? What are you talking about?"

"It's a branding plate, pet. Much more elegant than a burned brand, don't you agree?"

"What! You mean I'm going to have your bloody initials on my ass forever?"

Iason frowned, a little hurt by this. "Does that displease you?"

"I'm not a freaking animal to be branded like property!"

"But you *are* my pet, and you *do* belong to me."

"I don't belong to you or anyone else," Riki challenged, his eyes flashing darkly.

"Riki." Iason was angry, his voice shaking as he fought to control his emotions. "Now, that's it. You're going to tell me what brought this all on. Stop sulking and spit it out."

Riki looked away, silent.

Iason grabbed his chin, forcing his attention. "Look at me. Let's have it."

"Fuck off," came the mongrel's bitter reply. Riki stared defiantly into the Blondie's piercing blue eyes, eyes that were now sharpened with anger.

Normally such a remark would have earned him immediate retribution, but Iason was puzzled with his behavior. "What happened today? It must have been something in Midas."

As soon as the Blondie said the word, he realized he had uncovered the source of his pet's distress. The look in Riki's eyes was tormented—almost haunted.

"Something from Midas, is that it?" he asked, and then, more softly, "Tell me, Riki."

"I can't." Again the mongrel attempted to look away.

"Look at me," Iason commanded, grabbing hold of his chin and turning his head again. "You are going to tell me, and you are going to tell me *now*. Out with it."

Out of instinct, Riki flinched a little at his Master's tone of voice, which sounded dangerously impatient. Up to this point Iason had been fairly tolerant of his brooding, but Riki realized he was perilously close to pushing the Blondie a little too far. He knew what

his Master could be like when he was *truly* angry, and he didn't care to see it. Not that night. "I saw Guy," he answered.

"Guy?" For a moment the Blondie felt confused, trying to place the name. Then, he remembered. Guy was Riki's old pairing partner from the slums.

"He didn't see me. He was with someone else."

Iason studied him for a moment, trying to stave back the hurt and jealousy he felt at Riki's distress over a former lover. He turned away, attempting to hide his emotions by pouring himself a drink. He reached for a bottle of wine and then changed his mind, pouring himself a brandy instead.

Riki remained motionless, staring down at his feet. After a few moments he put his pants back on, zipping them up almost angrily.

"You still love this *Guy*, is that it?" Iason asked finally, after nearly draining his glass of brandy.

"I don't know," Riki answered, honestly. He was confused. He didn't know what to feel. He only knew that it seemed horribly wrong to be in love with his Blondie Master. If Guy could see him now, he'd hate him for what he'd become.

But Guy represented everything from his past: his childhood, his life as leader of Bison, all that he had been before he met the powerful Blondie who now ruled his world. To have forgotten him so completely seemed the ultimate betrayal, and Riki could not forgive himself for it.

His ambiguous reply gave Iason a deep stab of jealousy. "I suppose you'd freely return to his bed, if you could."

Riki snorted. "He'd never take me. Not if he knew what I've become. He'd never forgive me."

"And I suppose, then, that if you had the choice, you'd return to the slums?"

"I don't have that choice, do I? So I really can't answer you."

"You prefer Guy, as a lover?" Iason pressed.

The mongrel turned away, feeling heat rise to his cheeks. He was ashamed to admit that, in fact, if it was a question of sexual preference, he favored Iason—hands down.

"Answer me."

Riki turned around again, his eyes glimmering. "Since when do you care what I want or what I prefer? Is that why you dragged me here against my will and made me your slave? That's a hell of a way to show how much you value my preferences."

Iason paused for a moment before replying. "What exactly do you want?"

"What do I want? What I've always wanted! My freedom!"

The Blondie sighed. "Is it such a horrible thing to be my pet, Riki?"

"How would *you* like it if someone took *you* and locked you away somewhere for years at a time and forced you to do whatever they wanted? You'd feel the same way!"

"On the contrary," Iason replied calmly, "I'd accept my situation and do my best to please my Master."

"Hah! That's easy for you to say! There's not even the slightest possibility that would ever happen!"

"Riki," Iason sighed.

"Pets are nothing but scum!"

"You are *my* pet, and that is something to be proud of."

"You're so bloody conceited, Iason. You think the whole world bows down before you."

Iason laughed, but it was a hollow sound, one that hid his hurt. Without a word, he dragged his pet over to the sofa, unsure what he was doing but feeling the need to do something.

"Let me guess! You're going to spank me again!"

Instead, Iason pulled him onto his lap and held him close while the mongrel struggled and squirmed.

"Let me go!" Riki demanded.

He tried to free himself from his Master's embrace but found the Blondie's formidable strength too great an obstacle.

"I'm not a child. I'm not a toy!"

Iason remained silent, letting him blow off some steam. When Riki finally stopped struggling, he nuzzled up against his cheek to whisper in his ear, "I'm not letting you go until you acknowledge me as your Master."

"We'll be fucking sitting here forever then."

"So be it."

For a long time they simply sat thus until Riki began to realize that Iason was serious. Sighing, he let his head fall back against the Blondie's chest.

"Who do you belong to?" Iason demanded.

Riki remained stubbornly silent, refusing to give in. He was, however, in desperate need of a smoke. He squirmed uncomfortably for a few more minutes.

"If I tell you, can I go smoke?" he asked, finally.

"You may."

"You're my Master," he grumbled. "*Now* can I go?"

Iason answered by releasing him. "Come right back. I'm not finished with you."

Riki took off without a backward look. He made for the new balcony, where he immediately lit up, hands shaking as he did so. He took a deep drag and then exhaled, sighing.

The garden was beautiful at night. The aromatic night-waking flowers had opened under the light of Ios, and the pleasant murmur of the fountains was relaxing. He found a seat on the stone bench, staring into the dark, tranquil waters of the pond. He hadn't really noticed before, but there was something about the idyllic solitude of the garden that was almost sad.

Puzzled, he took another drag, wondering why such a strange thought had come into his head. It was as though he could feel Iason's presence. He turned to look toward the door from the main pool, but the Blondie wasn't there. Yet he could sense his Master—his enormous sadness, and something else. Jealousy? Anger?

Gradually he began to realize that these feelings had nothing to do with the garden. No; it was as though he had somehow stumbled into Iason's mind and could see, somewhat indistinctly, the inner realms of the elusive Blondie he had come to love. Surely he was imagining it. Yet these feelings persisted, bombarding him with a bewildering flood of thoughts and emotions that could not possibly have come from his *own* mind.

"I'm going out of my fucking mind," he muttered, shaking his head. His thoughts then drifted to what Iason had told him about the night Raoul abducted him. Was it possible that the stories were

true about Agatha? What if...because they loved one another, because they felt so strongly, they were somehow able to ride Agatha's Halo and achieve a psychic link?

"Yeah, right," he laughed, feeling ridiculous for even considering it. More likely he was thinking about Iason because he felt guilty. Riki knew he'd hurt him terribly. It wasn't like the Blondie to drink hard liquor.

And yes. He did love Iason. Regardless of his feelings for Guy, he knew his heart belonged to his Master. But he also couldn't deny that just one glimpse of Guy had hurled his emotional world into a state of chaos. Seeing his old lover was like seeing himself as he once had been. As he would never be again.

Now he longed again for his freedom. Even just to get out of the penthouse for a while and stretch his legs in Tanagura. He sighed, his gaze moving to the pool. The water looked cool and refreshing, the moon projecting a path of light across its tranquil surface.

The impulse to feel the water on his bare skin was too tempting to resist. He tossed his smoke over the ledge and stripped, and then dove into the cool, exhilarating water.

"Fuck yes," he breathed, as he came up for air. It felt wonderful. He swam for a bit, and then let his body go limp as he floated on the surface, staring up at the stars. He looked for Icaria and found it right away, remembering Iason's trick.

Iason was going to be pissed when he found him swimming without permission. Riki knew this, yet couldn't bring himself to really care. And now he was too comfortable to get out. It was too late to pretend he hadn't gone swimming—his hair was wet. He would just wait until the Blondie came for him.

As it happened, he did not have long to wait. Within a few moments, Iason was standing there at the end of the pool, hands on his hips.

"I see you're bent on punishment tonight," he scolded. "I did *not* give you permission to use the pool, pet. Get out. Now."

"You'll have to come in and get me," Riki challenged.

"I mean it, pet. Now."

"I mean it too."

“Riki!”

“Iason!” The mongrel yelled back, grinning.

Iason suppressed a smile at his pet’s deliberate naughtiness. “I’m warning you, Riki. You *don’t* want me to come in there after you.”

“Is that supposed to scare me? ’Cuz I’ll have you know I’m the best swimmer in Ceres. You won’t be able to catch me.”

“Ohhh,” Iason laughed brokenly. “You’re really in for it now, pet.” He undressed, starting to enjoy Riki’s teasing.

“Can Blondies actually swim? What about all that hair?”

Iason answered this by diving perfectly into the pool, disappearing beneath the surface.

“Oh fuck,” Riki muttered, trying to see where the Blondie had gone. The water was too dark. The next thing he knew, Iason had his arms around his waist as he emerged from the water and pressed up against him.

Riki struggled a bit but knew it was useless. As usual, Iason had overpowered him with embarrassing ease.

“So you decided to disobey me and then taunt me? I think you must enjoy being punished,” Iason whispered. “You couldn’t go one day, could you?”

He pushed him up against the side of the pool, his own feet touching the bottom of the pool but his pet’s dangling far above.

“In your dreams,” Riki replied, finding Iason’s closeness in the water rather erotic.

Iason then kissed him slowly, his tongue exploring him as though for the first time. It was an exquisite kiss, one that elicited from Riki a passion previously only reluctantly tendered. The mongrel responded so eagerly and hungrily that Iason was actually rather surprised, given their earlier spat. Thrilled, he moaned a little as he kissed him more aggressively. He began kissing and biting Riki’s neck, twisting his left nipple in just the way he knew the mongrel loved best.

The mongrel groaned. He was becoming aroused again, and he could feel Iason’s erection swelling against his body. “Bloody hell.”

“Ohhh...Riki,” Iason breathed. “Please be like this tonight.”

“Like this?” Riki slid his hands down Iason’s back, grabbing hold of his firm ass.

“Yes,” Iason whispered, excited. “Just like that.” He kissed him again and then flipped Riki around so that he was pinned up against the pool wall.

The mongrel grabbed onto the ledge with a little gasp. “Be gentle,” he pleaded.

Honoring his request, Iason slid into him slowly, kissing his shoulder and neck. They had never copulated together in water before, other than the hot tub, and both Master and pet were enjoying its sensual novelty. It was nothing short of a delicious fuck, wickedly erotic and all the more intense after their earlier argument.

“Pet,” Iason sighed. “You feel...perfect.”

Riki made a little moan of agreement.

“I want you to be happy with me, Riki.”

“Hmmm?” Riki opened his eyes.

“What would you like? Ask me, and I will give it to you, if it be in my power. Anything you like.”

“Let me go free,” Riki answered.

“Except that,” Iason replied, sounding a little annoyed.

“You said *anything*.”

“Must you spoil my offer? Surely there is something you want.”

“Loosen my chain, then. Let me go out into the city.” Riki waited, his heart beating a little faster.

Iason paused for a long moment, thrusting a little slower. He was remembering what had happened the last time Riki had gone out into Tanagura with Daryl and Katze. But surely his pet knew better than to make the same mistake twice.

“Very well. I’ll allow you more privileges—but you’ll have to be accompanied by one of the bodyguards.”

“What about Katze?”

“No.”

“It’s not like it was before. I have the taming marks to prove it.”

“I said *no*.”

Wisely deciding not to push the matter further, Riki fell silent, listening to the sound of Iason’s breathing. The Blondie was approaching his ascent, making the distinctive, barely audible grunts and moans that Riki knew so well.

“Oh, pet,” Iason sighed, kissing and nuzzling him furiously on the shoulder and neck.

“Ah! That tickles,” the mongrel cried.

“You’re mine. You’re my pet,” Iason whispered, stroking him insistently. “Come for me.”

As if forced to ejaculate by the Blondie’s mere command, Riki climaxed. His sex cries rose up into the night, above the sounds of traffic and club music in the city below. In the distance, someone cheered, almost as if Tanagura herself celebrated his rapture.

Iason had released as well. “Good boy,” he whispered.

Riki winced as the Blondie withdrew. “Are you really going to fuck me all night?” he whined.

“Yes, pet.”

“Why?” Riki demanded.

“To teach you.”

“Teach me what?”

“To submit fully to me in all things.”

“What makes you think that’ll happen? I’ll just be sore as hell and pissed off, to boot.”

“No arguments. Now, we have a little matter of your disobedience to attend to. You’re in for some discipline, my naughty little pet.”

“What kind of discipline?”

“You’ll find out. Let’s go.” With effortless grace, Iason lifted Riki out of the pool and up onto the ledge, and then jumped out himself, ignoring the steps at the end of the pool.

“Can I smoke once more before we go back?” Riki pleaded.

“No.”

The mongrel pouted at this. “Why not?”

“You smoke too much, pet. Perhaps I should start restricting you and ration them out one at a time.”

“Don’t do that!” Riki pleaded. “I’ll—okay—I’ll smoke less, I promise. Really. I *will*.”

Iason gave him a warning look, and then shook his head as Riki picked up his shirt. “Don’t bother dressing.”

Thrilled, Riki followed the naked Blondie, wondering if they would run into anyone. “Aren’t you afraid someone will see you?”



As if on cue, at that precise moment a movement in the pool room alerted them both that they had been spied upon...by Enyu. The Xeronian dashed back toward his room and Iason let him go, deciding to deal with his infraction later.

"You're in for it, cat-boy," Riki called after him, grinning.

His smile faded when Iason reprimanded him with another hard smack to his ass.

"Ow," he complained, rubbing himself.

"My, you're the sensitive one," Iason observed. "Tonight's going to be a little hard on you, I think."

"What does that mean? You're not seriously going to punish me, are you? Just for jumping in the pool?"

"That and other things."

"What other things?"

"As your Master, I do not need to give you any reason for disciplining you, pet."

"Then what's the fucking point?!"

"The point is that I enjoy disciplining you, and if I feel like doing so, I will."

As if to illustrate this, Iason suddenly picked Riki up, throwing him over his shoulder. He strode back into the mongrel's suite and then went into the bedroom.

"What are you doing?"

The Blondie answered by tossing him onto the bed. Then he stood, one hand on his chin as if considering what to do next. He was still dripping wet, his hair hanging in dark blond clumps. Then, he leaned over and dug through Omaki's box, finding the bondage cords. With a little smile, he snapped them in his hands.

"Turn over—face down," he ordered.

"Ooo, kinky."

"This is not a game, pet."

"You suck the fun out of everything," Riki grumbled. "This *could* be amusing. Instead you have to be all mean and punishy. You're a sadist, you know that?"

"I'm not being sadistic. I'm simply asserting my authority as your Master. And *punishy* is not a word."

The Blondie proceeded to tie Riki's wrists to the bed.

"Ah! That's...tight," Riki complained. "Anyway I said it, so that makes it a word."

"Hush!"

Iason continued going through the box as Riki desperately tried to twist around to see what was going on. The next thing he knew, he was blindfolded. He shivered, feeling deliciously vulnerable and wondering what the Blondie would do next.

A new sound pierced his consciousness: a soft clicking that he couldn't quite place. Then, suddenly, he felt a sharp sting on his thighs. He winced, holding his breath; then, he felt another burning strike to his thighs.

"Ouch! What the hell is that?"

"Did I give you permission to speak?" Iason demanded, striking him again. "Pet. Make no mistake. When you deliberately disobey me—or defy me—you *will* be punished. You were nothing but trouble from the time we left Midas until just a short time ago. You removed the bandage when I told you not to. You defied me openly and refused to acknowledge me as your Master. Then you went swimming without permission."

"Oh, come on! Now you're just making up random shit to punish me for! You know, you've got serious control issues."

"One does not talk back when one is being punished."

"*One* can fucking kiss my ass!"

The Blondie answered this by striking him a few more times with the cat-o-nine tails he'd been using.

"Ow! Dammit, Iason! Quit being such a total dick! Just because you're jealous of Guy doesn't mean you have to be an asshole."

After a brief silence, Riki felt the tickle of Iason's still-wet hair on his back and smelled the Blondie's distinctive scent as he leaned close to him.

"Oh, yes. I *am* jealous. You're my pet, and I want you all to myself. Even more...I want your heart completely, Riki. But only if you willingly give it to me."

Riki knew this was his cue to protest that he loved Iason, but his pride prevented him from doing so, partly because he was now

pissed off at him. “How could I ever really love someone who took away the only thing I ever wanted?” he replied coldly.

For a long moment there was a dead silence in the room. Riki’s heart began beating faster when he felt Iason move away. He trembled, waiting for what he knew would be torture.

He waited. And...waited.

Finally he began to doubt that Iason was still in the room. Had he just left him there? A sound from the other room confirmed his suspicions. Iason was pouring himself a drink.

*Fuck*, Riki thought, kicking himself for deliberately provoking Iason on such a sensitive issue. He was honestly a little scared about what the Blondie would do, and the waiting, tied up and blindfolded, was agony.

Another drink in hand to ease his pain, Iason donned a silk robe and situated himself in a chair where he could see Riki still tied to the bed in the next room, but far enough away that his pet would know he had left. He was angry, yes. But mostly hurt. Although by now he was accustomed to the mongrel’s sharp tongue and nasty jibes, this time Riki’s words twisted his heart, sending his mind reeling with a thousand thoughts.

His headache had been worsening all night and now it was unbearable. He closed his eyes, fingers pressed to his temples. He had taken an Opiate-6 and when that hadn’t worked, a second. It occurred to him that the combination of both opiates with hard liquor was probably unwise, yet he was too preoccupied with Riki to really be too concerned.

Sighing, he thought again about his pet’s words. Perhaps if he gave Riki what he wanted, he could win the mongrel’s heart. Maybe a week of freedom, just to stretch his legs a bit.

Although the thought of Riki with his old pairing partner tore him up with jealousy, it was worse to see him so depressed and bitter about his situation.

And Iason was beginning to think he would never really tame Riki. Perhaps Raoul was right: a mongrel simply couldn’t be tamed. Without inbred constraints, there was nothing to curb rebellious behavior, except discipline—and Riki had proved remarkably

resistant to change, despite frequent and severe punishment. Deep inside, the Blondie almost admired his pet for refusing to bend to his will. Every time he had forced him into submission, Riki had eventually come back fighting as though he had never even been punished at all.

Finally, Iason's headache began to dissipate. He was starting to relax. He finished his drink and then, rising, made his way back into the bedroom.

Riki startled when he heard the sound of his Master approaching. He knew he was in for some serious punishment and was already trembling. Iason walked over to the side of the bed and sat down, his hair brushing against Riki's back.

His Master's eerie silence, coupled with his own pressing need produced a rather unfortunate result: much to his complete mortification, Riki became incontinent.

"Oh fuck," he whispered. "I'm...sorry...Iason. I didn't mean to, but I just wet myself."

Iason noted his pet's condition with no judgment. Although it was unusual for Riki, he was not the first pet who had wet himself. When the Blondie felt the need to reprimand or discipline a pet, it was not uncommon for such a thing to occur.

For Riki, however, his inability to control his own bladder in the face of fear filled him with humiliation and shame. But to his complete surprise, Iason then removed his blindfold and untied him, gently.

"Go clean yourself up," he said softly.

Rubbing his wrists with relief, Riki studied his Master, a little bewildered with his change of mood. He wanted to apologize but couldn't quite bring himself to do it.

"Please, don't call Katze. I'll clean it up," he pleaded.

"Very well," Iason conceded, smiling slightly at Riki's endearing expression and his plea that his accident not be made publicly known.

His gratitude conveyed with a heart-stopping smile, Riki turned and started for the shower, and then stopped, turning to look back. "Maybe you could join me...in a few minutes," he offered with a seductive grin.

Pleased, though a little surprised at his pet's sudden change of mood, Iason returned the smile, fully intending to take Riki up on his offer.

He rose, leaving the bedroom and making for a chair, when suddenly he felt that something was terribly wrong. It was as though he had become disconnected from his body. He could not understand how to move his legs. The room had begun to sway and spin; he could no longer stand. In that moment he realized that he had made a fatal error by taking two opiates. As he fell, his mind collapsed around this realization.

Riki was marveling over Iason's kindness regarding his little "mishap." And he knew his Master well enough to know that his punishment was finished for the night. Iason had donned a gentler demeanor, one that the mongrel, of course, preferred. He was anxious for the Blondie to join him so he could show his gratitude properly.

Humming a little off-key tune as he enjoyed the warmth of the shower, the mongrel was suddenly overcome by a horrible sense of foreboding. About Iason. He immediately knew, with complete certainty, that his Master was in trouble.

Dashing out of the shower without even turning the water off, his fears were confirmed when he saw Iason sprawled out on the floor.

"Iason!" he screamed, rushing over to him. Falling to his knees, he shook him, desperately trying to rouse him. "Iason! *Iason!*"

The Blondie was completely unresponsive.

"Katze! Odi!" Riki shouted.

Within seconds, Odi rushed into the room. When he saw Iason's lifeless body on the floor, he immediately knelt down to examine him. "What happened?"

Riki, still naked and dripping wet from the shower, shook his head. "I don't know. I was in the shower and I just...had a feeling something was wrong."

"He's breathing," Odi remarked.

The security guard flipped open his communicator, placing an emergency alert to Tanagura Medical.

Katze entered the room next, though he looked a bit disoriented and walked stiffly, wearing only a loose robe. Riki had forgotten

about his condition until he saw the eunuch standing there, wincing from pain.

“Katze, I’m sorry I called you, but—”

“What did you do now, Riki?” Katze demanded angrily.

“I didn’t do anything! Honest. He was drinking brandy and...Katze, he takes those O-6s all the time for his headaches. I think maybe he’s overdosed!”

“Holy shit. Are you sure?”

Riki nodded. He felt as though he *knew* this to be the case, even though he could not articulate exactly why he felt so certain.

“I’ll get my kit,” Katze announced, rushing out of the room.

Attracted to the commotion in Riki’s suite, Enyu then appeared, stopping dead in his tracks when he saw Iason. “What’s wrong with Master Iason?” he asked, frightened.

“We think he’s overdosed,” Odi answered.

Enyu, while concerned for his Master, could not help but notice that Riki was dripping wet...and deliciously naked. He took in the mongrel’s impressive body with obvious delight, his eyes widening.

Riki was oblivious to the voyeur, desperately trying to rouse Iason. “Come on! Wake up. Iason! Open your eyes!” He leaned close, brushing the hair from the Blondie’s face. “Iason. *Please.*”

Katze returned with his emergency kit, something he had learned to keep nearby for just such a pharmaceutical mishap. He flicked the injection with his fingers and then proceeded to administer it directly into Iason’s vein.

“What is that?” Riki asked anxiously.

“An opiate blocker. Hopefully it will reverse the effects of the Sixes. If it’s not too late.”

Riki, hearing these last words, uncharacteristically began weeping. “Iason, please. Please wake up.”

Katze noted Riki’s emotional state with surprise but said nothing. Perhaps Daryl was right. Perhaps Riki *did* love Iason, after all.

Enyu similarly was a little surprised by Riki’s outpouring of emotion, given his typically rebellious attitude toward his Master. Though he had witnessed an extraordinarily intimate moment in the pool earlier that evening, he had assumed the mongrel was simply

aroused by Iason's irresistible sexual presence. That Riki actually felt something for Iason—perhaps even loved him—put an entirely different spin on his view of the infamous Riki the Dark.

"Can I do something to help?" Enyu asked, feeling useless.

"Go turn off the shower," Katze answered. "Riki must have left the water running. I don't know why the automatic shut-off hasn't kicked in."

Happy to have a task, Enyu hurried into the shower room.

Leaning close to Iason's face, Riki began whispering his name over and over, begging him to open his eyes.

As if responding to his pleas, Iason's eyes fluttered and then opened. The look on his pet's face was priceless: tear-stained worry suddenly transformed into relief and joy.

"Iason!"

The Blondie smiled, treasuring the moment. He had never seen Riki look upon him with such concern or love, and it filled his heart completely, healing the evening's wounds.

Riki instinctively bent down and kissed him on the cheek. "I was so worried. You scared the shit out of me!" With shaking fingers he stroked Iason's face. "If anything had happened to you...fuck! I thought you were going to die."

"Would that have been so great a tragedy?" Iason asked softly.

"What? Of course it—what kind of thing is that to say? Yes it would have been a fucking tragedy!"

"Then you care for me, Riki?"

Riki leaned closer. "You know I do. You know I...care for you. Shit. You made me say it in front of Katze and cat-boy."

Katze smiled at this, but Enyu was simply transfixed by the romantic scene unfolding before him.

The medical team arrived and pushed Riki roughly aside to examine Iason.

"He's okay," one of the medics proclaimed, nodding toward Katze's kit. "You're lucky you had that injection. Anyone else would be dead."

Katze nodded. He knew perfectly well how dangerous the opiates were, which was why he always kept the kit close at hand.

Enyu's sharpened senses had picked up on something odd, and he then noticed the wet spot on the bed. He smiled, realizing that Riki had most likely wet the bed. He couldn't wait to tease the mongrel about it—at a more appropriate time, of course.

Iason got up, shrugging off the medics' assistance but allowing Riki to help him up.

"Leave us," he commanded.

"It might be wise if—" one medic began but was silenced by Iason's stern look.

"Out. Everyone," Iason repeated.

With obvious reluctance, Katze, Odi, Enyu and the medical team retreated, leaving Master and pet alone.

"Let's lie on the bed," Riki suggested. "Are you sure you're okay?"

"Yes, love," Iason whispered, smiling.

"Wait! I have to change those sheets!" Riki attempted to pull the sheets from the bed but found they wouldn't budge.

Iason laughed at his expression and reached out to flip open a panel on the side of the mattress. With the push of a button the sheets were suddenly freed.

"Ooo! Fancy." Riki pulled the soiled linens from the bed, tossing them down the laundry chute. He looked at the small wet spot still on the mattress, frowning. "Crap."

Iason laughed again and pushed another button. The bed made a humming sound and the spot disappeared. The subtle, calming scent of lavender seemed to rise up from the mattress itself.

"How did you do that?" Riki demanded, sniffing. "And that smells really good."

"It's self-cleaning, my darling pet," Iason replied, finding the mongrel's ignorance about such commonplace features endearing.

"Okay well, where do you keep the sheets?"

Iason pushed another button and a dispenser opened at the foot of the bed, shooting the linen out across the bed like a parachute. It settled down slowly. Automatic lever arms smoothed the sheet over the corners and held it in place.

"Cool!" Riki exclaimed. "Hey! What else does the mattress do? Does it vibrate?"



"I'm afraid not. Would you like a bed that vibrates, Riki?"

"Hell yes! They have those in the motels in Midas, you know."

"Oh? And how often have you been to the motels in Midas?" the Blondie asked, moving into the shower room to fetch a towel.

"You don't want me to answer that."

Iason came up behind him, smiling. "You're still wet," he whispered, drying him off with the towel and then wrapping it around him.

"Yeah."

Iason made himself comfortable on the bed, holding out his arms. "Come here."

Riki snuggled in next to him, sighing. "You scared the shit out of me, you know," he whispered. "And I knew something was wrong. Even before I saw you. That's why I left the shower. I just *knew* you were in trouble."

"Hmm."

"Iason. Do you think—this is the third time something like this has happened...I think maybe we have a psychic link."

"The third time?"

"Yes. Oh...the second time was earlier this evening. When I was in the garden, I felt...*you*. Your sadness and anger."

"I *was* feeling rather melancholy," Iason confirmed.

The mongrel snickered at this. "Melancholy? You're funny, the words you use."

"I might say the same of you, my little wolf cub," the Blondie replied, kissing him on the nose.

"That tickles," Riki complained, brushing his nose furiously. "Hey! I think we should develop it, this link thing. Wouldn't that be cool?"

The Blondie laughed. "It might be interesting."

"Okay, what am I thinking?" Riki shut his eyes tightly and dramatically, his brow furrowed with concentration.

Iason smiled. "I don't know, pet."

"Fuck! You're not trying."

"Oh, pet," Iason whispered, pulling him close and then stroking his cheek. "Riki, there is nothing in this world that means more to me than you."

"I know," Riki said, with a rakish grin.

"And...you care for me?" Iason pressed, longing to hear him say it again, and hoping secretly for the utterance of another word he'd waited a long time to hear: *love*. If Riki would only say he loved him, Iason felt as though he would want for nothing else.

"For the hundredth time, yes, I care for you, you big oaf," Riki replied, and then, in a softer voice, "I have for a long time."

Sighing, Iason squeezed him tightly. "Riki," he breathed. "I've decided to give you what you asked for. A taste of it, at any rate."

"What?" Riki pulled away, looking at him with surprise.

"One week. I'm giving you one week of freedom. To stretch your legs...and," now his voice lowered and he continued, a little sadly, "whatever else might please you."

"Seriously?" Riki was so excited he leapt to his feet. An entire week of freedom? "You're letting me go free, for real? What about my pet ring?"

"I'll remove it. For that week only."

"When?"

"Tomorrow."

"Iason." Riki choked back tears, looking at his Master with such love and gratitude that the Blondie's heart melted.

"Does that please you, pet?" he whispered softly.

Riki could not even reply. He stared down at the handsome Blondie, feeling his love deepen beyond bearing. He had never in his wildest dreams imagined that his Master would actually grant him an entire week of freedom. He knew that Iason did so with great reluctance, and that made him appreciate the gesture even more.

The Blondie, although saddened at the thought of his pet pursuing his old pairing partner, could not help but be moved by Riki's reaction to his decision. And his pet had confessed his affection for him. Surely, whatever happened in one week could not change that.

"Come back to bed," Iason scolded, when Riki began pacing.

"But now I'm excited!"

"I'll put you to a task," the Blondie replied, stripping off his clothes and holding his erection meaningfully.

"All right." Riki dove playfully onto the bed like a little boy, facedown, and then rolled onto his back and grinned up at the Blondie. "I'll give you an especially good blow job this time."

"Mmm. Tell me again, first."

"Tell you what?"

"That you care for me."

"I care for you," Riki replied, wrapping his hand around his Master's massive organ. "I care for you, Iason." The mongrel began whispering the wanted words over and over as he pleased the Blondie, who was nearly out of his mind with lust and excitement.

"Oh, Riki, Riki," Iason cried, releasing his seed onto the mongrel's tongue.

Riki drank his semen with exaggerated enthusiasm, much to his utter delight.

"You're such a good boy," the Blondie praised.

"I'm not a *boy*," the mongrel argued, though he smiled as he moved to snuggle up in Iason's arms.

"A good pet, then. Shall I love you now, my pet?"

"Just hold me like this. That's all I want for now."

"Very well." Iason closed his eyes, sighing. He fell asleep almost immediately, turning over onto his side with a contented groan.

Riki was too excited to sleep and eventually woke Iason with his tossing and turning.

Finally the Blondie grabbed him from behind and pulled him against his body. "Settle down. You need your sleep, pet, as do I."

"I can't sleep."

"Try, or I shall spank you."

Riki smiled at this teasing threat, wiggling back into Iason's warm embrace. "Did I ever tell you I love the way you smell?" he whispered, breathing in the Blondie's intoxicating scent. "You smell like...I don't know...exotic places and faraway dreams."

Iason laughed at this, pleased with his pet's compliment. "You have your own distinctive scent, too," he answered, nibbling on his ear. Riki sucked in his breath in response. "Sex and rebellion and pets who need spankings."

"You really get a thrill out of spanking me, don't you?"

“Yes,” Iason admitted freely.

“What are you going to do when I’m gone, spank Enyu?”

“If necessary.”

“You,” Riki offered, after a moment’s pause, “can take Enyu, when I’m gone. If you need to.”

Iason smiled at Riki’s “permission” to take his own pet. “Are you certain, love?” he whispered, snuggling closer.

“Yeah,” Riki replied, a little uncertainly. “But promise me you’ll make him whimper.”

“Oh, Riki, Riki. I shall miss you dreadfully,” Iason murmured, squeezing him so tightly that the mongrel protested.

“Yeah, well. It’s only a week. But...I’ll miss you too.”

“Will you? Truly, pet?”

“I just said so, didn’t I?” Riki yawned, closing his eyes.

Eventually they fell asleep, both feeling equally content with how the evening had finally turned out in the end.



RIKI GRADUALLY CAME into awareness after a night of extraordinarily strange dreams. But his last dream was decidedly erotic, and he fought to stay asleep as he felt the strings of awakening pulling on him. He dreamed of Iason...and Guy, and in the dream he could somehow have them both in an impossible arrangement only encountered in the world of dreams.

Something...was not right.

Opening his eyes, he slowly focused on Enyu.

The Xeronian stared down at him, eyes completely dilated in their strange elliptical shape, his gold-flecked light green irises just edging the dark center, giving him a decidedly feline look. His hair was tousled wildly and he was leering at him, his mouth open.

Enyu was completely naked, encouraging an immense erection with one hand. The other hand tensely touched the mattress as he crouched on the bed like an animal ready to spring.

“Holy shit,” Riki breathed.

He realized then that Enyu had pulled the sheets from his body and was now admiring his naked form as he fondled himself.

“Don’t move,” Iason whispered. “He’s rutting.”

Disobeying Iason’s mandate, Riki turned to see Iason similarly displayed, his beautiful naked body sprawled on the bed. The Blondie was fully aroused.

Riki then realized he was aroused as well.

“What do we do?”

“I should have chained him up last night,” Iason cursed himself, feeling a little angry for failing to do so.

“Yeah, but...what do we do now?”

“Enyu,” Iason scolded. “What are you doing? Go back to your room this instant.”

Cat-boy responded to this command by laughing—a low, sensual laugh that gave both Master and pet chills. Next Enyu started crawling toward Iason, who remained motionless, feeling unable to resist. His lips parted, his heart began pounding, and he gasped when Enyu raked his nails down his body.

“Hey!” Riki objected, lunging for him. “Get off him, you bloody little freak!”

Enyu turned and tackled Riki, pressing his body against him and biting his neck, gently, and then finding his mouth and kissing him with such urgency that the mongrel could not help but respond. He found that he could not repel Enyu’s advances—nor could he bring himself to encourage them—and so he lay either limply or with his hands frozen mid-air, like a doll.

The Xeronian kissed his throat again, twisting his left nipple as if knowing instinctively where the mongrel’s erogenous zones were, and then began advancing down his body, from his chest to his abdomen, his final destination clear.

“What the fuck?”

Riki felt confused and ambivalent, unable to understand what was going on or why he wanted cat-boy to continue. He looked over at Iason, his eyes wide with panic.

“I don’t...want him to stop. I don’t know why.”

“Just let it happen, pet,” Iason soothed.



© Enyu in His Interval ©

Art by Tata



The Blondie was now lying on his side, watching the unfolding scene with fascination. He stroked himself openly, painfully aroused and wanting to join in. He also knew that if Riki hadn't stopped Enyu, he wouldn't have been able to resist the Xeronian's advances.

"I...don't want to," Riki whispered weakly.

Enyu moved lower, tormenting him with a tantalizing flick of his tongue along his shaft and head.

"Make him stop," he pleaded.

"Just relax." Iason watched, excited, his eyes glowing.

Enyu then took the mongrel in his mouth. Riki cried out, thrilled with the stimulation but not wanting it—not from cat-boy. But then the Xeronian demonstrated that he had a very special gift: his tongue and mouth became a sanctuary for erotic communion, and Riki responded to his compelling arts with a series of shudders, gasps, and groans—until finally he began to moan continuously.

"Iason, please," he gasped. "I don't want to come...not in his mouth. Please. Can't you do it?"

Iason gently pushed Enyu away, assuming his position between the mongrel's legs.

"Sorry," Riki mumbled, "you...you're going to get a mouthful."

Iason smiled up at his pet. "You taste like honey to me, my love. I would drink you dry if I could."

Riki responded to this with another moan, and as Iason took him into his mouth and gazed up at him seductively, waiting, he released, spasms of pleasure racing through his body. Iason closed his eyes and drank, truly relishing his pet's sex.

Enyu watched this exchange with obvious pleasure, continuing to fondle himself. When Iason finished, the Xeronian turned around and, on hands and knees, offered himself enticingly. "Please take me, Master," he purred.

With a sharp intake of his breath, Iason regarded this invitation with temptation, his lust-filled eyes betraying his desire. He was so aroused he was trembling, his heart pounding in his chest.

"Go ahead," the mongrel whispered, still relaxed from his orgasm and knowing that Iason desired it. Besides, he felt it was only right to reward his Master, somehow, for his promised week of freedom.



Iason needed no further invitation, thrilled that Riki had voluntarily pushed him to take Enyu. In truth, he wasn't sure he could have resisted, even if he had wanted to. He seized the vial of oil on the bedside table and poured it rather haphazardly over his cock, the oil dripping onto the sheets and down his forearm as he eagerly lubricated himself.

Then he moved behind the Xeronian, clenching his teeth as a low grunt escaped his lips. "Enyu," he gasped, pressing the boy's buttocks apart to better study the pink spiral of his portal. "You're a very enticing pet."

"Hey," Riki protested, though he remained where he was, feeling rather relaxed and disinclined to move. "Aren't I enticing?"

"Of course, my love," Iason answered, though his voice was a bit strained. He was having trouble controlling his arousal, his cock throbbing and twitching wildly. "But unless you're ready to get on your knees for me, I am proceeding with the agenda at hand."

"Nah, go ahead. I'll watch. As long as we're all clear that I'm equally enticing."

"Fuck *me*, Master," Enyu pleaded again.

"Indeed I shall," Iason answered.

Pushing Enyu's legs further apart with his knees, he spread him wide and positioned himself for entry. Grabbing onto his hips, he began bumping up against Enyu's entrance, a little frustrated when he could gain no admittance. He slipped a finger into his rectum, eliciting something between a moan and a growl from the Xeronian.

"Yessss," Enyu hissed. "Master feels good."

"That is only my finger," Iason warned, removing it once he had opened him a bit.

"Only your finger?" Enyu looked back, alarmed. Even in the throes of his interval he had sense enough to realize he was getting more than he'd bargained for.

"Yes," Iason answered, raising a brow, a small smile curling his lip. "Here's the rest of me."

He held Enyu firmly and then thrust the tip of his cock just past his portal. The Xeronian winced and then howled, attempting to wriggle away. Riki grinned, enjoying the show.

“It is too late to change your mind now.”

Iason sunk his fingers into his hips and then forced himself completely inside, gasping over his deliciously tight resistance. Enyu cried out in agony, rather stunned by the Blondie’s immense size.

Iason groaned, withdrew completely, and then repositioned himself, his thighs further apart. He penetrated again fully, pulling back on Enyu’s hips as he plunged in as deeply as he could.

Riki continued to watch, relishing Enyu’s anguished cries. He found he did not, at the moment, begrudge his Master taking his new pet. Strangely, he *wanted* Iason to fuck Enyu, wanted the Xeronian to cry out while his Master’s face contorted with pleasure.

“Ohhh,” Iason moaned, unable to suppress a vocalization of his pleasure. Enyu felt so good; the Blondie wanted to keep violating him forever. And Riki *wanted* him to—his pet wanted to watch him take Enyu. This Iason found extraordinarily erotic.

Riki kept his eyes locked on his Master, fascinated. Iason had never looked more handsome or masculine than he did at that moment, his face contorted with an expression that was a cross between pleasure and pain.

He was fucking Enyu brutally, selfishly—like a barbarian raping a captive, and the Xeronian cried out with each stroke, beautifully erotic cries which only seemed to fuel the Blondie’s lust. Iason continually pulled back on his hips, repositioning him and lifting him to get the deepest penetration possible. As he plundered his pretty new pet, the Blondie began grunting, almost growling—a guttural sound that Riki had never heard him make before.

Enyu remained submissively positioned, despite his cries of pain—which eventually changed to cries of pleasure.

“Harder,” Enyu pleaded, finally.

Iason was happy to oblige him. “Your tightness pleases me,” he hissed in Xeronian.

“I want to please you,” Enyu answered in the same tongue, thrilled that his Master had opted to speak Xeronian.

“Put your head down closer to the bed.”

“Master wants to fuck me deep,” Enyu replied, happily obeying his command.

"You're gripping me like a hot hand, little pet. I like hearing you cry out."

"What the fuck are you two saying?" Riki demanded, a little annoyed but at the same time fascinated by how sexy Iason sounded uttering such a strange, decidedly erotic language.

Enyu now began stroking himself, ready to ascend to his peak.

"Riki," Iason panted. "Why don't you...get under Enyu and return his favor?"

"What!" Riki cried, although he was already—amazingly—sporting a new erection and was secretly longing to join in.

"Give the poor boy some relief."

"Oh...all right." Sighing with deliberate exaggeration, the mongrel crawled over and slid under Enyu.

"This is awkward," he complained, fondling Enyu a bit as he tried to get closer.

"Yes, Riki...*good* Riki," Enyu gasped, thrilled that the beautiful mongrel had joined them. "Mouth...please...*mouth*."

"Yeah, yeah." Getting up on his elbows in the most uncomfortable position possible, Riki began pleasuring Enyu, stopping when the Xeronian immediately cried out with pleasure.

"I'm not swallowing you," he warned. "And no face-shots, either, you little punk."

"Keep going," Enyu begged.

Riki obliged him, taking his throbbing fullness into his skilled mouth. He decided that if he was going to suck off cat-boy, he might as well do it right. As he began wiggling his tongue, Enyu became extremely vocal. "Riki...so good," he whimpered.

Iason was beside himself with pleasure at seeing both pets copulating while he enjoyed the tight depths of a Xeronian in heat. Shuddering, he felt his ascent come on suddenly. He ejaculated hard, groaning, while beneath him Enyu similarly released, pushed over the edge by the sound of his Master's rapture.

Riki spit out his semen. "Fuck! I said not in my mouth, you bleeding retard!"

"Sorry Riki...I could not...resist."

"Yeah, well." Riki wiped his mouth, disgusted.

“You don’t like to drink it?”

“Not *yours*.”

Iason smiled a little at this exchange, knowing full well that Riki always swallowed *his* seed.

“Odi!” Iason called.

The towering, dark-haired bodyguard rushed into the room and took in the scene with a look of amused intrigue.

“Help me restrain Enyu. We need to chain him up.”

Upon hearing this, Enyu immediately began resisting, and it took all three of them—Master, pet, and bodyguard—to drag him to the hall, where he was finally chained up.

Enyu howled his protest.

“Cease that wretched sound at once,” Iason commanded, “or I will gag you and beat you.”

At this, Enyu became quiet.

“What happened this morning will *not* happen again, Enyu. The sexual activity of this household will not be determined by your rut.”

Enyu only smiled at this, saying nothing.

Iason became aware that all three of them were still naked, and he quickly went to his room to get dressed, looking toward Riki.

“Get dressed.”

Riki ignored this mandate for a moment, staring at cat-boy, who grinned at him eerily as he began coddling another erection. “This doesn’t mean we’re best friends or anything,” he remarked coolly.

Enyu said something in Xeronian, and the mongrel frowned.

“What is that, cat-boy language? Speak Amoian, you dipswitch.”

Iason, now dressed in his silk house trousers, answered that with a hard smack to his bare bottom. “I said, get dressed. And what he said was he didn’t need any friends, only more good lovers like you.”

“Humph,” Riki snorted, although privately he felt a little flattered. He went off to his room to dress, shaking his head at the way the day had begun.

Katze came into the hall, walking stiffly but looking surprisingly good, considering his recent whipping. Iason nodded at him.

“Master Iason,” he mumbled, confused when he saw the table already laid with breakfast. “Who made breakfast?”

“Tai, our new chef. He’ll be taking over all kitchen duties,” Iason replied matter-of-factly.

Tai, who came rushing into the great hall upon hearing his name, stopped and then bowed, waiting for instruction.

Katze nodded slightly. He had been worried about resuming his duties and felt sure that he had missed an entire day, at least. He had some recollection of a commotion in Riki’s room the previous night and wondered if he had dreamt it. Had Iason actually overdosed? He was amazed that no one had insisted he get up and attend to anything. He gazed at Enyu for a moment—the Xeronian was completely naked and masturbating, obviously in his interval.

“I see you remembered to chain him up,” he remarked.

“Actually, we had a little...encounter in the bedroom first thing this morning.”

Katze smiled a little. “So then, I was right?”

“Yes,” Iason conceded. “He was quite irresistible.”

Pleased with this compliment, Enyu beamed, now pumping himself faster. Katze and Iason regarded him for a moment.

“He’ll probably be like this for the next few days. We might want to give him a towel or something,” Katze advised.

“See to it. Katze?”

“Yes?”

“Today you will pick up Daryl from the hospital.”

Brightening at this, the eunuch nodded and then edged toward the table. “I smell coffee.”

“Sit down, help yourself. Odi—you, too.”

Enyu whimpered a little from the corner, feeling rather ignored.

Iason turned to Tai. “Something for Enyu, too.”

Excited, the Xeronian prepared to settle down to breakfast by ejaculating, his cries drawing everyone’s attention. Katze left the hall and returned with two towels, one wet and one dry, tossing them to the chained pet. Enyu accepted them gratefully, feeling rather in need of a good shower.

Iason, Katze and Odi sat down at the table. Riki came into the hall dressed in his street clothes, the very ones he had been wearing the night Iason first met him. The sight of his pet so attired brought

a look of sadness to the Blondie's face as he remembered his promise to Riki.

The mongrel, seeming to sense Iason's sudden change of mood, pacified him with a kiss to the cheek before settling down beside him. "Morning," he said softly, almost seductively.

Iason smiled at this, pouring him a glass of juice. "Drink this."

"I want coffee," Riki protested.

"Juice first," Iason said firmly.

Katze was so excited he could hardly eat. "When should I go to the hospital?" he asked, finally.

"As soon as you are ready."

"I'm ready now," Katze replied, immediately rising.

Iason eyed Katze's empty plate and half-finished cup of coffee, but said nothing. "Very well."

Thrilled, Katze left the table, rushing back to Daryl's room to grab his keys.

"Oh! Daryl's coming home today?" Riki asked, as Katze came back into the room.

Katze answered this with a smile.

"Can I go with you?" Riki begged, excited.

"No, pet," Iason answered softly, touching his hand. "You'll see him soon enough, and I want you here with me today."

Katze shot Iason a grateful look, glad for some time with Daryl alone, much as he usually enjoyed Riki's company.

Riki now thought about Iason's promise and wondered when exactly the Blondie would set him free. He hummed a little tune to himself in such an endearing manner that Iason reached over and kissed his cheek.

"Are you happy, pet?"

"Yeah," Riki mumbled, his mouth full.

"This food is superb," Odi announced.

Tai beamed at the compliment, bowing from where he stood near one of the great hall pillars, watching them eat.

"Yes, Tai. Quite excellent," Iason agreed.

Katze had not been a bad cook, not in the least, but there was nothing quite like having a true chef in the kitchen.

"It's fucking awesome," Riki concurred. "This is like, the best food I ever had in my life! Can I have some coffee now?"

"Yes, pet," Iason answered, pouring him a cup.

"I'm off, then," Katze announced, giving Riki a little wink.

Riki grinned, and Iason gave him a slight nod.

The mongrel gulped down his breakfast, nearly choking at one point in his impatience to get on with the day. He was so excited that he began squirming restlessly in his chair, tormenting Iason with his fidgeting.

"Sit still," Iason chided. "Don't you know it's considered rude to eat like an animal? Slow down and try chewing before you swallow."

"Please, can I go to my room?" Riki pleaded.

The Blondie glanced at his plate. "You're not finished."

"That's only because I took seconds before I realized how full I am already."

"I should make you clean your plate to teach you the consequences of your greed."

Riki let his head fall forward onto the table, groaning. "Why do I always have to wait for you? You eat so bloody slow."

Iason sighed. "I see teaching you table manners has reached yet another impasse."

"I'm just a vulgar mongrel, what do you expect?"

"You're my pet, Riki," he answered, softly, "and as I've told you a thousand times, when you are at the table with me, I expect you to behave in a manner fitting for the pet of an Elite."

"Shouldn't I be chained up in the corner with Enyu then? I thought Elites didn't eat with their pets," he challenged, lifting his head with a roguish grin.

A slight jangling from the corner of the hall announced that Enyu was listening.

"Keep up this insolence and I'll not hesitate to do just that," came the Blondie's firm reply.

"Please? I wanna shoot some before I go." Riki hadn't played billiards in over two years, and he was a little worried that he'd lost his touch. If he was going back to Ceres, he wanted to make a good impression. After all, he still had his reputation to think of.

Iason's expression shifted, and for a brief moment a look of sadness pressed into his features. In the next instant he had concealed his emotions with a look of impassive acquiescence, nodding to excuse Riki from the breakfast table. The mongrel jumped up and rushed out of the hall without a backward glance at his Blondie Master.

Although he knew he could not break his promise to Riki, Iason now wished that he had not agreed to set his pet free for a week. Already images of Riki with this faceless pairing partner, Guy, began to torment him.

Even more than that, he was worried. Midas, and especially its slum Ceres, could be dangerous—he could not help but recall that he had first met Riki when the mongrel was being held down by some Elite bodyguards who would certainly have killed him if Iason hadn't stepped in.

And without his pet ring, Iason would have no idea where Riki was. He had already decided to secretly track him via a hidden tracer. Riki would be furious if he discovered it, but Iason simply had no intention of letting his pet disappear again.

Though he was tempted to have Odi or Katze quietly follow him, he knew that Riki would deeply resent this intrusion into his freedom, and he had no doubt that the mongrel would be quick to discover them.

The Blondie knew he would miss his pet dreadfully. As he considered this, his eyes gravitated to Enyu, who immediately perked up upon apprehending his Master's notice. The Xeronian was still completely naked and chained to the taming post, once again encouraging a healthy erection.

Enyu smiled at him seductively, hoping for some special attention from his Master.

But Iason had no intention of spending himself again on Enyu; this would be his last day with Riki for an entire week and he intended to save his lust for a final romp with his mongrel pet. Still, it was an undeniable comfort to know that Enyu would be available—and eager—to relieve his needs while Riki was away.

"Does Master want something?" Enyu asked, his eyes dilating.



“Not at this time, little pet,” Iason replied in Xeronian. He almost laughed at the utter disappointment on Enyu’s face. “I’ll let you know when I want you.”

Enyu embraced this final remark as a promise for future congress, his face lighting up with anticipation. “I want to make you moan, Master,” he whispered provocatively.

“I know you do. You’re a good little pet, Enyu.”

The Xeronian’s reaction to this compliment was to immediately increase the pace of his autoerotic manipulations, throwing back his head with a little groan.

At that moment, Askel announced over the intercom that Lord Sami had arrived with Juthian.

“Send them in,” Iason ordered.

The door hummed open, and Lord Sami and Juthian entered. Xian couldn’t help but smile at the sight of the chained pet stimulating himself in the corner of the room. Only Iason Mink would have a pet performing at breakfast.

Iason nodded at him.

“Xian.”

His eyes shifted to Juthian, who stood quietly behind his Master, his gaze averted.

The youth was dressed in formal silk robes bound with straps at the waist and a jeweled head-piece in the style of Aristian royalty. Iason was pleased. He was a very attractive boy indeed and appeared to be delightfully submissive. Exactly what he was looking for in a new attendant.

“Ah. I see you have your gift. I confess I was surprised when I received Jupiter’s message,” Lord Sami remarked.

“I’m sorry?” Iason shook his head, confused.

“You picked him up at my brothel? The Dark Horse?”

“Ah. Yes. I’d forgotten.”

“Do you know, that was the first time since we graduated from the Academy that I was contacted directly by Jupiter. It caused quite a bit of excitement at the brothel, I can assure you. When my house manager saw Jupiter’s seal on the incoming message he nearly messed himself, I think.”

"I apologize for all the fuss."

"Oh, no. You misunderstand me. I felt *honored* to be of assistance. Although I confess, it was a rather odd gift from Jupiter, wouldn't you agree?"

"I won't argue with that," Iason lowered his eyes, his lips curled in a slight smile.

"He's—is he rutting?"

"Most definitely," the Blondie replied with a laugh. "He was quite...a handful this morning."

"Fascinating." Xian's eyes were continually drawn to Enyu, who now regarded him with unveiled desire. "He's....*leering* at me," he added, in a low voice.

Iason considered Xian for a moment. "You're welcome to enjoy him, if you like. He's quite eager to please."

Lord Sami was startled at this offer and simply stared back at Iason in disbelief. Of course, everyone knew that Iason took his pet, Riki, but to be invited to copulate with the Xeronian was nothing short of shocking...though exceptionally tempting.

"Truly?" he asked, finally.

"Most definitely. Go ahead. And where are my manners? Would you care for a drink?" Iason asked, rising.

"No—ah...what do you have?"

"Everything."

Xian laughed at this. "Why am I not surprised? You wouldn't happen to have a bottle of Augustian cognac, now, would you?"

"Of course. I also have Ambrosia, if you'd prefer it."

"Ambrosia?" Xian raised his eyebrows, impressed. One bottle of Ambrosia sold for over 500,000 credits.

"It's quite perfect. Would you like to try it?" Iason asked, moving behind the bar.

"Yes, please."

Xian regarded Enyu again, wondering if he should take Iason up on his offer. This was a decisive moment for the Blondie, who had never taken a pet before, and while he would normally never have even considered it, something about Iason's relaxed attitude and the whole atmosphere of his household made it seem as though doing

so would not be anything so extraordinary—that it was only natural to pair with a pet.

Iason started to pour him a drink and then remembered his new attendant. “Come here, Juthian.”

Eyes wide with fear, Juthian approached the formidable Blondie dutifully but hesitantly.

Iason smiled at his apprehensiveness. The boy was absolutely perfect for training. “This is the bar. The wines are all on the racks here to the left, everything else is here to the right.” He pointed out the glasses and showed him how much cognac to put in a glass. “I drink wine,” he continued. “Do you know how to open a wine bottle?”

“No, Master,” came the soft reply.

Pleased with Juthian’s docile obedience, Iason showed him how to uncork a bottle. “Now, take this to Xian,” he instructed. He handed him the cognac, and Juthian took it with trembling fingers, afraid to look his new Master in the eye—a trait that the Blondie found rather endearing.

As Juthian approached Xian with his drink, he was overcome with feelings of sadness and jealousy. His Master was regarding Iason’s pet with unveiled interest, and, because he knew him so well, Juthian also knew that the Blondie was unusually aroused.

“Mast...Lord Sami,” he corrected, offering the cognac.

Xian accepted it without a glance at him, which hurt Juthian tremendously. In fact, the Blondie was painfully aware of Juthian. He was trying to appear unconcerned that he was about to leave his favorite pet with Iason Mink, who he had no doubt would toy with Ju in some lewd manner or another, despite the boy’s recent modification. To hide his true feelings, he directed his full attention to the Xeronian, whose performance was, in truth, remarkable.

Enyu locked eyes with Lord Sami and, with a seductive gaze, spread his legs further apart to give him a better view as he fondled himself. He liked the look of this Blondie: he was tall—nearly as tall as Iason, and he wore a slender, long braid on the side of his hair, bound with a beaded tassel in a manner that reminded him of the ancient warriors of Xeron. He was extremely well-built and muscular, so much so that Enyu wondered if he had, in fact, been

trained as a warrior. His eyes were a stunning golden hue that Enyu had never before seen, and he was extraordinarily handsome, virile in every respect—his every movement eliciting an erotic flexing of his muscles. Enyu had never seen a Blondie in sleeveless attire; Xian wore a cape pinned at the shoulder, leaving a bare, well-sculpted arm exposed that he found especially provocative. Because his senses were heightened by his interval, Enyu could detect the scent of the Blondie, an intoxicating bouquet of expensive grooming products as well as a hint of pre-ejaculatory emissions.

Xian now desperately wanted to accept Iason's offer, but he felt too uncomfortable to engage in such licentious behavior in front of him. He sipped his cognac, his heart beating fast.

Picking up on his ambivalence, Iason walked over to him, and for a moment the two of them simply stood in silence, watching Enyu. The Xeronian was now becoming quite vocal, moaning and grunting as he began his final ascent. He leaned back on one arm as he thrust his pelvis up into the air, arching his back.

"Remarkable." Xian shook his head.

"This is his third time this morning."

"Is that so?" The stirring in Xian's loins did not go unnoticed by Iason, who glanced down at his bulge with a slight smile.

"Have you...ever taken a pet before?"

"No. But," the Blondie lowered his voice, "I confess I have often wanted to."

Iason laughed. "Xian, I know I am not the only one who finds it peculiar that you own a pet brothel and yet have never even taken a pet yourself."

Lord Sami seemed to blush a little at this. "It seemed like a good business opportunity. The brothel, I mean. Omaki once told me that he made more from his brothel than from the hotel itself, especially now that Apatia has become a hot-spot for visiting dignitaries."

"Hmmm. And I imagine Omaki was a little surprised when you used this information to build the Dark Horse. You must be his chief competition now."

Xian stood a little straighter, looking proud. "Yes, that's what I've heard. What do you think of my tower? Megala designed it, you

know. I wanted it to be even taller but Megala signed some sort of agreement with Omaki that prohibits his building anything taller than the Taming Tower in Midas.”

“It’s very impressive. I especially fancied the holographic stallion on the rooftop.”

“That was my idea,” the Blondie answered excitedly. “I heard Omaki was furious when he saw it.”

His gaze moved to Enyu again, who was pumping himself eagerly as he began his ascent.

“If you would like to spend a bit of time alone with Enyu, I have plenty of empty suites in the guest wing,” Iason offered.

“Hmmm.” Lord Sami sipped his cognac again, torn between his more salacious impulses and a deeply ingrained fear of offending Jupiter. But then, if Jupiter had *given* the Xeronian to Iason, perhaps she was easing up on her well-known prohibitions regarding Elite/pet sexual congress. If Jupiter could tolerate, perhaps even encourage, Iason’s deviance, would she do the same for any Elite?

But...Iason was Jupiter’s favorite. Everyone knew it. Perhaps Jupiter’s leniency was reserved for Lord Mink alone.

Xian struggled with his inner uncertainties until he came upon a realization: even if Jupiter only allowed Iason special permissions, it was *Iason* who had invited him to take the Xeronian.

“This...Ambrosia is outstanding. I’ve never had it before,” he remarked, finally.

“Ah yes. Everyone must try the very best...at least once.”

Lord Sami smiled slightly at Iason’s veiled reference. At that moment Enyu ejaculated, crying out so beautifully that shivers ran down the Blondie’s back.

“Perhaps,” he conceded.

“So?”

Xian hesitated for a moment, summoning up his courage. “Very well. I accept your offer.”

Iason turned to Enyu, who was now lying on the floor, relaxing from his release.

“Enyu.”

The Xeronian opened his eyes, surprised, and immediately sat up.

"You will go with Lord Sami now. Obey his every request," Iason announced, unlocking his chain from the floor post.

"Yes, Master," Enyu answered brightly, giving the anxious Blondie a breathtaking smile.

Lord Sami's heart was beating so fast he could hardly contain himself. He couldn't believe he was about to take a pet, his most potent fantasy since his early days at the Academy. He only wished it could have been Ju.

Juthian watched this unfolding scene with a sense of overwhelming sadness and a sharp stab of jealousy. His Master was truly going to take Iason's pet? It seemed horribly cruel that he would do so...after...after that afternoon a couple of days before, when Xian had tormented him with such a long, sensual kiss, ironically after Juthian was no longer a man.

He regarded the Xeronian with disdain; he hated him already, and it was all he could do to keep from crying out as his Master left the hall with Iason and the captivating pet. He struggled with his emotions, fighting back hot tears that pressed into his eyes, his face and lips tingling.

At that moment Riki sauntered into the hall, and then stopped short upon apprehending Juthian.

"Hey," he demanded. "Who the hell are you?"

Juthian looked up, eyes brimming with tears.

"Fuck. I...I didn't mean," Riki stammered and then fell silent for a moment. "Oh. You must be the new attendant. I'm Riki." He gazed at him, puzzling over his face, which was strangely familiar.

"I'm Juthian," came the soft reply.

"You're...hey! You're that pet Raoul whipped!"

*With the nice ass*, he remembered.

"Yes." Juthian lowered his eyes, ashamed.

Riki stared back in disbelief. If Juthian was now an *attendant*, that meant....

"They modified you?" he whispered.

Juthian nodded, swallowing hard to keep from crying.

"Shit. Those fuckers."

“Master Iason requested it,” Juthian replied, his eyes flashing with unmistakable anger.

“He’s an asshole,” Riki muttered.

“What’s that, Riki?” came Iason’s sharp reprimand, as he strode up behind his pet.

“Um...nothing. We were just talking about...this one guy.”

“I heard what you said clearly enough,” Iason whispered, pulling Riki’s arms behind him and giving him a hard smack on the rump.

“Ow! Cut it out already!”

“I’ll give you more to complain about if you don’t straighten up.”

“How can I straighten up when you’re bending me backwards?”

“Riki,” Iason sighed.

The mongrel gave an impish grin, wiggling his ass against the Blondie’s trousers.

“Pet,” Iason scolded, trying to keep from smiling.

“What?”

“Go...to your room until I come for you.”

“Oh, all right. Sheesh. I was just talking to the new kid.”

Juthian watched this interchange with a sort of quiet fascination. He had never before witnessed a Master and pet behave in such a manner together. Riki trotted off dutifully, seeming surprisingly happy—certainly not what Juthian had expected of the notorious mongrel. Riki seemed mischievous, yes, but in a playful way. And Lord Mink seemed remarkably tolerant of his completely unorthodox behavior.

“Come, Juthian. I will show you to your quarters. This way.” With that, Iason turned abruptly and left the hall.

Juthian hurried to catch up with him, marveling at the size of the penthouse and the beauty of the great hall, which was lined with immense turquoise pillars, the floors of a similar aquamarine marble. In one part of the great hall—the main living area or parlor, Juthian presumed—there were all manner of comfortable-looking chairs and divans, especially near the fireplace and between the tall, arching windows that lined one side of the penthouse. In that area the flooring appeared to be of Amoian cherry, covered with luxurious carpets and tapestries. Everywhere he looked he saw some

sort of beautiful painting, artifact or sculpture—it was almost like a museum, or perhaps a palace. Although Lord Sami’s estate had been quite luxurious, Juthian had never seen anything like the penthouse of Iason Mink. He blinked as he looked up, wondering if his eyes were playing tricks on him, for it seemed as though exotic blue butterflies fluttered against the skylights between the spectacular mural that ornamented the ceiling.

They turned down a long corridor, and as they passed by one of the rooms, Juthian heard the unmistakable sound of Lord Sami in sexual excitement, his groans tormenting him with the knowledge that his former Master was engaged within.



THE DOOR HUMMED CLOSED, and Xian stood for a moment, simply staring at the Xeronian who looked up at him so provocatively, waiting for his command. His heart was beating so hard he could hear it in his ears.

“Enyu, isn’t it?” he asked finally, removing his gloves.

“Yes. Should I call you Lord Sami?”

“Call me Master,” Xian replied, his eyes gleaming. “Lie back on that bed and spread your legs wide. I want to watch you stimulate yourself. I’m keeping the lights on—I want to see everything.”

“Yes, Master,” Enyu purred, climbing onto the bed and settling down comfortably, giving Lord Sami just the view he had asked for as he began stroking himself with experienced fingers.

“That’s it,” Xian whispered, watching him quietly for a moment. “Yes. Just like that. Now, keep doing that...and insert a finger.”

Enyu obeyed, rolling onto his side and straining a bit to accomplish the position.

“Nnnn,” he groaned.

“Now, thrust it.”

“Yes, Master. Like this?”

“Exactly like that,” Lord Sami praised. “Good boy.”

“Oh! It feels good, Master!”



So far, this was no different than instructing any of his pets. But now, as Xian prepared to cross into new territory, he found that he was trembling. He began to undress, smiling when Enyu reacted to this with obvious pleasure.

The Blondie was physically stunning. His muscles flexed with every movement, betraying his strength; his chest, in particular, was broad and well-cut. "Please fuck me, Master," Enyu pleaded.

"Oh...I will," Xian replied, his voice quivering a little from his excitement. "But first, I'll have you pleasure me with your mouth."

"Should I stop what I'm doing?"

"Yes. Sit on the edge of the bed."

Xian approached him, now fully naked, his formidable erection throbbing and twitching in his hand. The Xeronian's eagerness to please excited him beyond measure. Holding himself up to the youth's lips, he slipped one hand behind Enyu's head and pulled him forward.

"Pleasure me," he commanded.

And Enyu did so, with such enthusiasm and skill that Xian nearly ejaculated on the spot. He was unaccustomed to the stimulation and groaned loudly right from the start. Pleased, Enyu gave his best performance, sliding his tongue seductively across the head, licking under the rim, and then sucking him gently.

Xian closed his eyes, throwing his head back, imagining that it was Ju who pleased him so perfectly. His vocalizations were loud and incessant; the Blondie simply could not believe how good it felt. Realizing that he was ascending too fast, he abruptly withdrew, trying to regain his composure.

"Turn around," he ordered, finally. "Get...on your knees."

"Like this?" Enyu piped, happily obeying and offering himself enticingly by laying his head down on the bed.

"Exactly so," Xian answered, licking his lips, his mouth suddenly gone dry.

He could not believe what he was about to do.

A part of him was still anxious about violating one of Jupiter's prohibitions, but another part felt excited just knowing he was engaging in an illicit union. Years of training at the Elite Academy

had made even the mere idea of sexual congress with a pet unspeakably erotic, precisely because it *was* so forbidden.

He could not help but imagine Headmaster Konami's reaction, if the Headmaster could see him now. He would have Xian bent over his desk, mercilessly re-acquainting him with his crop whip. It was a position he had assumed many times in the Headmaster's chambers—for reasons Konami would have been mortified to learn, for Xian had harbored a secret infatuation with the handsome Headmaster from his earliest days at the Academy.

Xian quickly moved from this mental image to another private, forbidden fantasy—being taken by Headmaster Konami himself...or perhaps ravishing the Headmaster, holding him down and taking him against his will. He alternated between this fantasy and thoughts of penetrating Ju and became so excited that he almost lost his seed on the spot.

Lord Sami stood at the edge of the bed, and, after licking his finger, inserted it into the pet's portal, testing it. The Xeronian gripped him tightly and Xian shuddered, for a moment wondering if he would truly fit inside him.

"This...may hurt you," he advised.

Enyu turned and looked back at him, seeming to discern, in that moment, exactly what sort of game Lord Sami would love most. "Please don't hurt me, Master," he pleaded, his eyes shining. "You're too big! Please don't ravish me, I'm too small!" At the same time that he protested, Enyu pushed his knees a bit further apart, deliberately offering himself in an inviting manner.

Xian grunted, feeling a renewed surge of carnal agitation from the pet's deliberately provocative manner. As he pressed himself up to his portal, he once again desperately wished it was Ju who was about to take in all of him. He penetrated slowly, relishing every sensation, a low groan escaping his lips. Enyu immediately cried out, staying him for a moment. He ran his hands up and down the pet's hips and thighs, waiting for him to adjust. When Enyu quieted, he inched in a bit more, again eliciting another wail of protest. Breathing hard, Xian waited again, now feeling a little impatient for the pet to embrace the totality of his Elitehood.

When Enyu relaxed again, Xian grabbed onto his hips and then forced himself completely inside him, his need now too urgent to give much weight to the pet's comfort. The Xeronian voiced his agony as Lord Sami sunk his cock so hard and deep inside him that his pelvis slammed up against his buttocks with a loud slap.

Xian closed his eyes, imagining it was Headmaster Konami he violated so exquisitely, who cried out so loudly in protest to his intimate pillage. Once inside, Xian immediately pulled out and impaled Enyu with his shaft again, holding his hips firmly to keep him in position.

He loved the way Enyu *pretended* to wriggle away and yet remained submissively positioned, struggling just enough to be extraordinarily stimulating without being truly disobedient.

"You're not going anywhere," he announced, delighted with the pet's protests. "I have you now, and I'm going to take you even harder, to punish you for trying to get away. Hold still, now."

"But it hurts, Master," Enyu replied, again making some pretense of a struggle.

"You knew it would hurt," Xian panted. "Naughty pet!"

Enyu seemed to know exactly what Xian would find most exciting, and though the Blondie had no doubt his cries of pain were genuine, there was an element of playfulness and coquetry in the pet's manner that he found especially intriguing. He felt certain that, despite Enyu's yelps and anguished pleas, he was enjoying being taken. As the Xeronian finally began to adjust to him, his vocalizations betrayed his escalating lust.

"Oh," the Blondie breathed, "you're gripping me beautifully."

Enyu answered by wiggling back against him, offering himself for deeper penetration, an invitation which the Blondie accepted.

Now that Enyu began crying out his pleasure, Lord Sami imagined it was Juthian he ravished so thoroughly; yes, it was Ju who cried out so provocatively, who bucked back against him with such delightful submission, squealing and moaning as he approached his climax.

Xian increased the cadence of his conquest as his needs mounted, and before he knew it, he was at the threshold; then he

had pressed beyond, releasing his essence in a moment of unadulterated ecstasy.

Enyu joined him by vigorously pumping himself, his seed shooting across the bed as he gave a final, wildly sensual sex cry.

Weak from the pleasure of his release, Xian withdrew and collapsed onto the bed, covering his eyes with his arm. Enyu joined him, and for some moments they lay together.

Although the Blondie had relished his exploits with the Xeronian, he would have exchanged Enyu for Juthian in an instant. A feeling of profound loss began to sweep over him as he realized that he was going home without his beloved pet. He had not anticipated how much he would regret letting Juthian go. And the fact that he had paired with Iason's exotic pet had only made him realize, too late, what might have been with his own Ju.

His romp with Enyu had surpassed his most potent fantasy; the creature had completely enamored him with his provocative manner and then had taken him, physically, to heights he had never before achieved. But then, he had never paired with anyone before Enyu. Now that he had, he knew he would never be satisfied with only voyeurism. He had tasted what was forbidden and now wanted more.

He would go to the next auction and find the perfect pet, he decided. Or perhaps he would simply choose one from his own brothel, the Dark Horse. And yet, even as he formulated this plan in his mind, his thoughts drifted again to Juthian.

To his Ju.



IT WAS ALL KATZE COULD DO to keep from running to the elevator once Iason dismissed him. He was so desperate to see Daryl, he could hardly contain himself. Already he had the day planned; he would take Daryl to his apartment and spend some time with him there before bringing him back to the penthouse.

He cursed the elevator's slowness as it gradually descended floor after floor. The elevator finally stopped on the ground floor, opening

to Elite parking. At least Katze had the benefit of VIP parking at the Eos Tower, and he was glad for it. His sleek roadhugger was parked next to Iason's vehicles in the space reserved for the Head of the Syndicate and his household, just steps away from the elevator door.

Within minutes he pulled out of the Eos Tower and was barreling down Chunamenkahn Boulevard toward Tanagura Medical. He drove like a maniac, even more so than usual, illegally passing any vehicle he perceived to be too slow—which ended up being nearly every vehicle he encountered. Ignoring the angry shouts and blaring horns, he sped on by, flipping off a few particularly annoyed drivers here and there.

Soon Daryl would be in his arms again. Although they had only been apart for a few days, it seemed like an eternity to the amber-eyed eunuch.

When he arrived at the hospital, he avoided the elevator and took the stairs two and three at a time, arriving on Daryl's floor a little out of breath. He was immediately accosted by the blue-haired lady, who, upon perceiving his identity, inexplicably gave him a friendly, almost obsequious greeting.

"Oh! Lord Mink's attendant, aren't you? Daryl is quite ready to go and doing very well, I assure you."

Katze blinked, surprised by the sudden change in the nurse's attitude but too excited about seeing Daryl to give it much thought.

"This way," she said, as though he needed instructions on how to get to Daryl's room. "He's been ready since early this morning."

The eunuch followed her and then passed by her when they approached the room. Daryl was sitting in a chair by the window, gazing out almost sadly.

"Daryl!"

Daryl turned and, seeing him, broke into a smile. "Katze."

"Are you ready to go, love?"

"Ready."

He stood up, reaching for his small bag of belongings, which Katze immediately seized.

"I've got it. Let's go." He put an arm around Daryl, bending down to give him a kiss on the cheek.

“Give my regards to Lord Mink,” the blue-haired lady insisted. “Be sure and tell him he’s most welcome to come by and visit, any time.”

Katze stared at the nurse, perplexed. “Yeah. All right,” he muttered, brushing by her in his haste to get Daryl all alone.

He practically carried Daryl down the hall to the elevator, and once inside, he immediately pressed him up against the wall, kissing him so passionately that Daryl began gasping for air.

“Katze!”

“I can’t get enough of you,” Katze apologized. “I’m taking you to my place, love. I just need to hold you.”

Daryl answered this by running his fingers through Katze’s hair, encouraging his intoxicating kiss.

The door to the elevator opened and Katze dragged him out of the building.

“Katze,” Daryl laughed. “Slow down.”

Katze turned and, with impossible ease, scooped him up in his arms, carrying him to the roadhugger. Daryl giggled the entire way.

Setting him down on his feet, Katze pressed a finger to his nose. “Now, stop complaining or I’ll have to spank you. Actually I might just spank you anyway, for fun.”

Delighted, Daryl slid his hands to Katze’s waist, pulling him close. “Yeah?”

A little surprised with Daryl’s assertiveness, but thrilled, Katze groaned. “Oh, Daryl.” He kissed him again, hungrily. “I’ve missed you so much.” He bent down and bit Daryl’s neck, eliciting a sharp cry that turned heads.

“Get in the car,” he commanded.

Daryl obeyed, turning to look at Katze as he drove, again like a wild man, through the streets of Tanagura until they reached Midas.

Katze shook his head. “It’s been hell without you.”

“I know. I hated the hospital.”

“I’ll never forgive Raoul. I can’t tell you how many times I thought about going to his suite and beating the crap out of him.”

“Oh, Katze! You can’t do that!” Daryl protested, worried.

Katze smiled. “I know. But I *felt* like it. Let’s just say he’s lucky you made it through okay.”

“You can’t touch a Blondie, Katze.”

“Don’t tell me what I can or can’t do!” Katze replied with mock sternness, shaking his fist. “I’ll kick his ass if I want!”

Daryl giggled at this, relaxing. “I missed you.”

“Daryl, Daryl, my sweet love—I missed you too. You have no idea. I’ve been worried sick about you.”

The gentle, grey-eyed eunuch was delighted to have anyone “worried sick” about him, reflecting that, not so long ago, he had despaired of ever finding love at all. Now he had Katze—sexy, mysterious, kind, wonderful Katze.

When they reached Katze’s apartment, the red-haired eunuch leapt out of the vehicle and rushed around to Daryl’s side, lifting him up and carrying him inside. He immediately made for the bedroom, where he laid him carefully on the bed.

“Do you feel okay? Can I get you anything?”

“Just hold me, Katze.”

“I’ve missed you something awful,” Katze groaned as he lay down beside his lover. “I’ve been so worried about you.”

“You have?” Daryl pressed, wanting to hear Katze say it a few more times.

Katze kissed his nose. “Of course, kitten. In fact, I’ve never been so worried about anyone before in my entire life.”

Daryl blinked, smiling. Kitten? He loved Katze’s pet names, adored the way he made him feel as though he were the only lover he’d ever had. But of course, Daryl knew that was not the case.

Katze laughed. “Hey. What the hell was up with the blue-haired lady? All of a sudden it was like she was throwing down the red carpet and kissing my ass.”

Daryl smiled. “Oh...Iason charmed her, I think.”

This elicited a low laugh from Katze, who shook his head. “Ah. Iason. He has a way of...doing that. He’s hard to figure out.”

“Yeah.” The boy’s smile suddenly faded.

Katze studied him, puzzled. “What is it?”

Shaking his head, Daryl looked away, feeling a bit overcome with emotion and a little angry with Katze.

“Hey.”

Katze took hold of his chin to force his attention.

“What’s up?”

“I said nothing,” Daryl replied, almost sharply.

“Don’t take that tone with me. I’ll bend you over my knee, don’t think I won’t,” he teased. “So spit it out already.”

Daryl frowned. “Why didn’t you tell me about the whipping?”

“Oh, I see. Who told you?”

“Riki. When he came to visit earlier. Did you really think you could hide it from me?”

“No,” Katze admitted. “Not for long. In fact, I confess I’m a bit sore at the moment. I’m due for another opiate, I think.”

“Oh, Katze! And you were carrying me!”

“Hush, now. I *wanted* to carry you. And I only just now started feeling it, honest.”

“Can I see?”

“You don’t want to see me, sweetheart. I’m a mess.”

“Yes, I want to see!” Daryl protested. “And why didn’t you tell me it was going to happen?”

“Because I didn’t want you to worry about it.”

“But Katze, we’re lovers! Lovers are supposed to share things with one another. What if I hid something like that from you?”

Katze frowned at this, shaking his finger. “You’d better not, or I *will* punish you, mark my words!”

“Then you can’t hide things from me,” Daryl argued, pouting. “If you really loved me, you wouldn’t.”

Katze laughed, pulling him close and kissing him on the cheek.

“You’re so adorable when you sulk.”

“Katze! I’m serious!”

“All right. I’m sorry I hid it from you, then.”

“Let me see you. Did he use a full-sized whip?”

Katze nodded, hesitating. “Daryl, I opted for acceleration, but I’m afraid it won’t be pretty. And I’ll probably be scarred.”

“Quit stalling! I want to see.”

With a sigh, Katze rolled onto his stomach.

Daryl slowly lifted his shirt, gasping with horror when he saw the deep lash marks. “Oh, Katze!”



"I warned you. And I'll bet this looks pretty good compared to how I looked right after the whipping."

"It must have been unbearable!"

"It wasn't pleasant," Katze admitted with another sigh. "I think Iason was pissed off."

"He's a mean Blondie," Daryl announced, angrily.

Katze laughed. "Well, yes, he does have a mean streak. But let's be fair, I *did* suck off his pet. And there are a lot of Blondies who might have had me put to death for that. I'm just glad he's sparing you. I couldn't have forgiven him, if he had done the same to you."

"I'm not going to be whipped?"

"No, sweetheart. He feels you've been punished enough—and I quite agree."

Daryl fell silent for a moment, unable to truly appreciate Iason's concession when he was staring at Katze's scarred flesh.

"How many times did he strike you?"

"Don't know. I passed out."

"Poor Katze! I wish I could have been there for you."

Katze rolled onto his back, holding out his arms. "Come here."

Daryl hesitated. "Doesn't it hurt to lie on your back?"

"I'll be okay."

Katze wrapped his arms around him, looking down into his eyes. "Don't *ever* doubt my love, Daryl," he said softly and then bent down to offer a long, eagerly accepted kiss. "We'd better get back though," he added reluctantly. "Iason will be pissed if he finds out we didn't go straight back to the penthouse."

"Yeah," Daryl agreed, a little nervously.

"Tonight," Katze promised, pointing a finger at him.

"Tonight?"

"Tonight I'm going to make you cry out so loud Iason will demand to know what's going on."

Daryl smiled, burying his face in his lover's chest. Katze pulled him close, shutting his eyes. For a long time they lay together thus, spilling into one another as though they had ceased to be separate beings but were now one unit—one heart, mind and body.



RIKI WAITED IN THE BILLIARD ROOM, trying to perfect his game. He could hardly believe that in a few hours he would be freed of his pet ring and allowed to return to his old haunts in Midas.

How would Guy react when he saw him? What about his new pairing partner? And the rest of the gang—would they think he'd changed? Did he look any different? Did he *seem* different?

Riki knew that, in fact, he *had* changed. Over two years as Iason's pet had ensured that. This worried him. Would they think he'd gone soft? What about his marks of punishment?

This was something he had been fretting about. Guy would ask about them, no question. The only solution was to wait for a few days before taking him to bed; that was easily enough accomplished by playing a bit aloof and seducing him slowly and then being sure that they paired in a *dark* room. Or perhaps he could simply pretend he was into rough sex.

"Shit," he cursed, missing a shot when he remembered his branding. How would he explain that? Perhaps if he covered it with a bandage and feigned an injury of some kind?

"So you're considered the best at billiards in Midas?" Iason taunted, standing in the doorway.

"You can't judge me by that," Riki retorted. "I was distracted."

"Then how about a game?"

"You're on." The mongrel set up the table, gifting Iason with an arched look that betrayed his confidence in his skill.

Iason smiled, chalking up his cue. "Shall I break?"

"Go ahead." Riki watched him with glimmering eyes, certain that he would soundly defeat the arrogant Blondie.

With a look of equal certainty, Iason broke the nest with a sharp crack, sending three balls smartly into the pockets.

Riki raised an eyebrow in surprise, impressed. "Nice," he conceded. It was a side of Iason he had never seen before, and he found the Blondie's arrogance attractive when backed up by indisputable skill.

Smiling, Iason proceeded to clear half the table before missing an especially difficult shot.

With a roguish grin, Riki moved into position, and then with practiced ease nailed shot after shot. His mood improved progressively with each success and gradually his anger faded away. Defeating Iason was exactly what the mongrel needed and it filled him with new confidence.

Iason was surprised at the mongrel's skill and then a little irritated when it became evident he had just been beaten by his own pet. "I stand...defeated," he sighed, placing his cue on the table.

"As the champion, I demand some compensation," Riki retorted.

"I see. And what is it you're claiming?" The Blondie stared back at him with a deliberately provocative gaze.

"I don't suppose I can claim my third night when I get back?"

"No. If you want it, stay here with me."

Iason made the offer in jest, although he secretly hoped Riki would abandon his plan to return to Ceres.

"Then," Riki replied, ignoring his offer, "I demand sexual favors now. Get undressed."

The mongrel stood, arms crossed on his chest, waiting.

Amused with his pet's authoritarian demeanor, Iason complied, removing his clothes with his usual quiet grace.

Riki watched him, a little surprised—but delighted—that the Blondie appeared to be humoring him. He unzipped his pants to release his quickly developing erection, fondling himself for a moment as he contemplated what to make Iason do.

"Bend over the table," he ordered.

"What, no kissing?" the Blondie teased.

"Oh. Yeah. Come here first."

Iason obeyed, bending down to kiss him slowly. He slid his hand around Riki's back and pulled him close, his tongue exploring the mongrel in unrushed, sensual paths of pleasure.

"Uhn," Riki grunted, breaking away, his heart pounding. "Fuck, you're a good kisser."

Iason slipped his warm hand around his pet's shaft, stroking him as he attempted to kiss him again.

“Whoa, hold on. That’s enough,” Riki announced, fearing premature release. “Now, do as I say. Bend over that table.”

“As you wish, Master Riki.”

The Blondie proceeded to present himself, looking back with such a provocative expression that the mongrel shivered.

Riki was feeling extraordinary, his excitement over the day making him almost giddy. Suddenly he altered his agenda and decided to do something extra special for Iason in gratitude for his week of freedom.

He stepped forward and dropped to his knees.

Gasping, Iason closed his eyes as the mongrel spread him and began exploring him with his tongue. He had not expected it, and it was a pleasure he absolutely adored, especially when it was offered voluntarily. The sensation was heavenly; he drew his breath in sharply, shuddering.

Riki savored Iason’s response, finding his gasps especially erotic. When a long, low moan escaped his Master, however, he found that he could wait no longer. Rising up, he positioned himself behind the Blondie, spreading his own pre-ejaculatory wetness over the tip of his cock. Then he slowly slid into Iason’s remarkable depths, releasing an unconsciously held breath when the Blondie gripped him beautifully.

“Fuck yes,” he groaned, withdrawing and sliding in again, this time even deeper as he pulled back on the Blondie’s hips.

He was especially enjoying Iason’s position of submission, bent over the table for his pleasure. The Blondie was breathtakingly lovely, his soft, nearly-white hair spilling onto the billiard table, his back sculpted with just the right amount of firm muscles, his buttocks silky smooth and perfectly curved.

“Shit. I’m going to miss this,” Riki said, before he realized he’d vocalized his thoughts aloud.

“Are you?” Iason whispered, pleased.

“Most definitely. You’re so fucking perfect...oh god...I love it when you squeeze me like that, shit.” Riki groaned, throwing his head back. “Iason, you’re so....”

“Touch me,” Iason demanded, now anxious for release.

Riki pulled the Blondie's hips back from the table and reached around to fondle him, lying on Iason's back for easier access.

"Yes," the Blondie encouraged. "That's it...keep—"

"I'm gonna come," Riki warned. He began pumping Iason rather aggressively without meaning to, confused by his own excitement.

Iason responded positively to this maneuver. "Yes. Yes," he gasped. "Oh...Riki!"

"Fucking Jupiter," the mongrel groaned, sinking one last time into the Blondie's depths before all his pent-up lust was expelled. Wave after wave of pleasure washed over him, each spasm announced with a breathy moan.

The sounds of his arrival triggered Iason's release, and the Blondie's gasps and cries mingled with Riki's as they achieved coital bliss in concert.

"Holy fuck," Riki exclaimed, collapsing completely onto Iason's back, eyes closed.

A thought then occurred to him that had been nagging him for some time; he knew, deep in his heart, that sex with Guy had never been this good. He was not even sure why he wanted to see Guy again. He wanted a week of freedom, yes. But resuming his relationship with his old pairing partner...now he was not so sure that was even what he wanted.

"Don't go."

"Huh?" Riki opened his eyes.

"Don't go to Ceres, Riki," Iason whispered. "Stay with me."

"But...you promised!"

"Yes. I am not saying you can't go. I am just *asking* you to stay."

For some moments Riki was quiet. He withdrew. "How can you ask me that?" he asked, finally, a little irritated. "You know how much it means to me."

Sighing, Iason stood up. "Then, promise me you will take a tracer with you that you can activate if you get into any trouble."

"Sure," Riki replied, shrugging to conceal his sudden relief. "Now that we're talking about it...when can I go?"

"We can go now."

"Seriously?" Riki brightened, excited. "Hey! Can I use my credits?"

"Yes. I also have some paper notes for you, in case you need them. But use your credits. I'll add more if you need it." Jason also knew that, by using credits, he could track Riki's movements and purchases. "And how were you planning to get around?"

"Dunno. Trade my body for rides?"

Jason shot him a disapproving look as he dressed.

"I was just kidding," Riki muttered. "Oh! Can I get a bike?"

"I was thinking more along the lines of a vehicle. You can borrow any of mine."

"I can't go back to Ceres driving something like that...it would be too...ostrichacious."

"I think you mean *ostentatious*," Jason suggested, smiling slightly.

"Yeah. Whatever. Please...I haven't ridden in over two years!"

"That's what I'm worried about. Those bikes are quite dangerous."

Riki snorted at this. "Maybe for you sissy Blondies. I practically grew up on a bike."

"A stolen one, no doubt."

"So? Can I help it if I was born in the slums? We had to do whatever it took to survive, you know."

"You'll wear a helmet." Jason shot him a warning look to dispel any argument.

"Sure, okay. I would have anyway."

"Then, we'll get you the very best."

"A Z-789 Skywalker?" Riki asked, eyes wide.

"If that's the best."

"Fuck yeah, it's the best!" Riki was so excited, he could hardly stand still. "Can I zip you?" he asked, impatient to be off.

Jason looked down at him, his voice lowering. "Riki. If you need...*anything*, or if you...want to come back, please call me. I'm giving you a handheld. In fact, if you just want to talk, perhaps you could call me?"

"I hope you don't mean I have to check in with you every day," Riki protested, frowning.

"No," Jason replied. "Although I would be pleased if you did."

"Come on. I'll feel like you're watching me if I have to call you!"

"At least promise me you'll call if you need anything."

The look in the Blondie's eyes was so intense that the mongrel was silenced for a moment. He swallowed, feeling a little guilty knowing that he probably wouldn't call. "I will," he answered.

Iason sighed, closing his eyes. "Then, let's go."

Master and pet then left Riki's suite and were about to exit the penthouse when Katze and Daryl arrived.

"Daryl!" Riki exclaimed.

"Riki." Daryl smiled.

"You look good."

"You've been gone quite awhile," Iason noted, giving Katze a pointed look.

"I'm sorry. It took forever before he was released," Katze lied, hoping Iason would not check up on this fact.

Iason nodded. "Daryl. Where are your release papers?"

Daryl dutifully handed them over, and the Blondie examined them briefly. "So. You are to rest for the next week." He turned to Katze. "You'll be training Juthian, then. He arrived earlier today."

"Where is he?"

"In his room. I put him in the guest wing, next to Enyu. Katze, call housekeeping for room 4."

"All right," Katze replied, puzzled.

"I'll be back in a few hours."

"I'll be back in about a week," Riki added, grinning.

Surprised, Daryl glanced at Iason, who offered no explanation.

"Take care, Riki," Katze said, softly.

"Katze." Riki winked at him as they left the penthouse.



IASON DROVE TO THE EDGE of the slums and put his vehicle in park. He turned to look at Riki, whose eyes were shining brightly.

"I'm here...I'm really...*here*," he breathed.

"Riki. Please. Be careful," Iason whispered urgently.

"I know how to take care of myself," Riki retorted, cocking his head back in a way Iason hadn't seen in a long time.

“Yes. But just in case.” Iason handed him a laser, a compact model that was easily concealed.

“Fucking awesome!” Riki exclaimed, turning it over in his hands.

“You have your cash, and here’s your emergency tracer. It’s embedded in this handheld.” The Blondie handed him a slim, rather expensive-looking device but refrained from mentioning that the tracer was already activated. He knew Riki would be angry if he found out, but he couldn’t bear the thought of not knowing where he was at all times.

“The tracer is also a visual phone. Please call me if you need anything—or perhaps if you just want to talk.”

Riki admired the slim, shiny silver object for a moment. “This is really nice.”

“You’re holding it upside-down, pet,” Iason said gently.

“Oh.” Grinning sheepishly, Riki turned the handheld over, though continued to stare at it uncertainly.

“You open it here,” Iason instructed, pointing to the sleek, nearly transparent tab at the bottom of the unit. The device sprung upon.

“Cool!”

“The tracer activation is here,” Iason pointed to the red EMERGENCY/ACTIVATE TRACER button prominently displayed on the panel.

“You must think I’m really stupid,” Riki protested.

“No, pet. I’m just trying to explain the device.”

“I can read, you know. It says ‘Emergency.’ I can read that.”

“Pet, I wasn’t trying to be condescending. You need to twist this button, here, clockwise to activate it.”

“Yeah, okay. It’s a phone, too, then?”

“Yes. It’s already programmed. Just hit the ‘IM’ key. Right here,” Iason leaned forward, pointing to the button.

His hair brushed against Riki’s thigh, and the mongrel instinctively turned his head to breathe in the Blondie’s exotic scent. For a brief moment he was distracted, aroused by Iason’s closeness. Part of him wanted to toss the handheld aside and lower the seats.

“Mmm, okay. Sure. Oh, I get it. IM—Iason Mink. Very fancy. Okay so, I just push it?”



“Yes. Call me tonight, love,” Iason pressed. “Just to be sure you know how to use it.”

Riki snorted at this. “How hard can it be? You *do* think I’m a total idiot. Sheesh.”

“Have you ever used a handheld visual projector before?”

“Well *no*, if you want to get all technical. All right, can’t we just test it now, then?”

“Very well,” Iason sighed, a little disappointed.

“So, I just push this,” Riki pressed the little button.

Immediately, Iason’s own handheld chimed, and the Blondie pulled it from his pocket and opened it, holding it in his hand. As soon as he did so, his image was projected in front of the mongrel’s receiver as a three-dimensional holographic image. Riki’s image likewise appeared before Iason.

“Fuck yeah!” Riki exclaimed. “Shit!” He laughed when his comments echoed over Iason’s receiver, delayed by a split second. “Wooo! Okay, now *you* say something.”

Iason smiled at the mongrel’s transparent delight over such simple technology. “Oh, pet.”

Riki laughed when the Blondie’s comment was repeated on his own device. “Okay, how do I shut it off?”

“Just hit the same button again.”

The mongrel did so, continuing to grin. The images disappeared and he shut the device.

“So who else can I call with this?”

“Only someone who has a visual handheld.”

“Fuck.” The mongrel frowned. “So that means basically I can only call *you*.”

“Who else were you hoping to call?” Iason asked, feeling a little hurt and jealous.

“Hmmm? Er...no one. I was just wondering. I was just teasing! Sheesh, you’re sensitive today. So, can I go now?”

“Are you so anxious to go, Riki?” Iason asked sadly.

Riki sighed dramatically. “Of course I’m anxious to go! That’s the whole point! You said I could go, and now you’re trying to make me feel guilty for wanting to go.”

Iason nodded, falling silent for a moment. He looked so forlorn that Riki couldn't help but be affected.

"Look. It's not that I want to be away from you. I'm just looking forward to the chance to stretch my legs." The mongrel's heart began to pound. He was afraid Iason would change his mind, and now that his freedom was so close, he couldn't bear the thought of *not* going. "Besides, it's only a week."

The Blondie smiled at this, comforted by Riki's reassurances.

"So?" the mongrel pressed. "Can I go now?"

"Very well. I'll get your bike out of the back. But first," now Iason leaned toward him, "give me a kiss."

"Sure."

"A *real* kiss, Riki."

"Oh. Yeah. Okay."

Riki scooted closer to him, and then, with unhurried deliberation, they kissed: a long, slow, tender kiss that spoke all that neither of them could say. It was, ironically, one of the best kisses they had ever shared; it was so good, in fact, that Riki was momentarily tempted to abandon his agenda and just return to the penthouse with Iason.

But, just knowing he was so close to home—he couldn't pass up the opportunity for a week of freedom.

Breaking away, Iason looked down into his eyes, stroking his cheek thoughtfully. "I expect you home in one week, before sundown, Riki."

The mongrel nodded.

"Don't make me come looking for you," Iason warned.

"I won't," Riki promised.

"Very well."

Iason flipped open his ring, pressed a button, and then slid a hand down the mongrel's pants, releasing the pet ring.

"Yes," Riki moaned, thrilled to finally be relieved of its controlling restriction.

Holding the ring between his two fingers, Iason looked directly at him. "One week, Riki. And then I expect no complaints when I put this back on you."

Riki nodded. "Yeah, okay."

With that, they got out of the vehicle and retrieved Riki's new bike from the trunk—a Z990 Skywalker, an upgrade from the model the mongrel had thought was the best. It was lightweight, fast, fairly quiet, and had both ground and hover capabilities, its design sleek and aerodynamic. It had cost well over 250,000 credits, and Riki was thrilled with it.

He donned his helmet and climbed on, starting the bike with a flick of his thumb. He turned to look at Iason, who stood watching him, his hair blowing around him in the wind, an inexplicable look etched onto his face.

"See ya," the mongrel said unceremoniously and then sped off.

"Riki," Iason breathed, watching his pet go, his heart breaking. He had a terrible feeling that he would never see his pet again, that something would happen, or that Riki would choose to stay away once he had a taste of freedom. "Please...come back to me," he whispered, feeling as though he had lost part of his very self.

IASON GOT BACK INTO THE VEHICLE, his mind reeling. He felt ill. His hands trembled as he started up the generator, and for a long moment he just sat, staring at the dilapidated buildings that heralded the entrance to Ceres. Riki was gone. Iason had not realized, until that very moment, how lonely he would be without his beloved pet. One week seemed like an eternity.

It wasn't just that he would miss him terribly. Ceres was a dangerous place. He could not help but remember how he'd first met his mongrel pet. If he had not intervened that fateful day, Riki would surely have been severely injured, if not killed.

The Blondie inserted the tracer card into his vehicle monitor and could see that Riki was moving through Midas...*fast*.

"Slow down, pet," he whispered, cursing himself for not putting some sort of speed restriction on the Skywalker.

He watched the blinking light move on the screen for some moments before he made any move to return home. Somehow, just sitting there on the edge of Ceres made him feel connected to Riki. He knew that when he returned to Eos, he would feel completely cut off from him.

The Blondie felt some comfort knowing he would still be able to trace his pet. And he desperately hoped Riki would be liberal in his purchases so he could monitor his activities. The Blondie had tried to encourage such a practice the previous night by pointing out how he would be able to treat his friends.

"That's true," Riki had answered, with a grin. "Wait until they see I smoke Dark Baccalias!"

“What are you going to tell them when they ask how you came into a credit portfolio?” Iason had asked.

“I’ll just say, that’s my own business, fuck off.”

Iason had laughed at this, wrapping his arms around his pet and nuzzling up against him.

Remembering the previous night and how they had talked and snuggled together made Iason especially dread being alone in his bed. For over two years he had enjoyed Riki’s warm body next to his, and he had become so accustomed to it that he hardly knew what he would do without him. Of course, he could always invite Enyu to his bed—no doubt the Xeronian would be quite eager to join him. But...it wouldn’t be the same. It wasn’t just any warm body he was going to miss: it was Riki.

Sighing, he drove back into Tanagura, relieved when he saw that Riki had stopped moving. He punched in the identifier command and pulled up Depravities, a pool hall and pet brothel owned by Omaki Ghan. He immediately sent an outgoing to Omaki, who answered via full visual.

“Iason. What a pleasure. In fact, I was going to call you to see what you thought of—”

“You own Depravities? The pool hall?” Iason interrupted, impatient with Omaki’s usual teasing.

“Ah, yes. As a matter of fact, I do. Yes. One of my many little... investments, shall we say. Don’t tell me you’re interested in—”

“Riki is there tonight. He may be there several nights this week. If anything happens to him while he’s there, Omaki, I’ll come and personally slit your chest open and pull out your lungs while you’re still alive.”

“No need to get me all aroused with sadistic threats,” Lord Ghan replied, with a little smile. “Consider it done. So, you’ve let the chick return to the roost, then?”

“You’ll not mention this to anyone else.”

“You needn’t worry about that. Surely you know by now I have no interest in Elite gossip.”

“And be sure Riki doesn’t know he’s being watched.”

“And...how am I to be compensated for these efforts?”

“Your compensation is remaining alive with all body parts intact.”

With a provocative smile, Omaki leaned closer to the screen. “Somehow I get the impression that you’re a little annoyed with me, Iason. Surely you didn’t take me seriously when I threatened to blackmail you?” The Blondie then turned, leaning down and to the side, and Iason could hear a tiny voice make some incomprehensible request. “Not now, Aki. Be a good boy and run off and play.”

“You really ought to put that boy back in the Midas Orphanage for a few years,” Iason commented.

Omaki laughed and paused before replying. “Oh, no. I’m far too attached to him for that.”

“I ought to issue a formal reprimand, you know. He’s not a pet.”

Lord Ghan’s expression shifted, a look of alarm pressing into his features. “Open frequency, Iason,” he whispered, a little urgently, through clenched teeth. “So, you’ll come back to the Tower soon and we’ll do lunch, then?”

Realizing his error, Iason cut off the transmission, silently cursing himself for being foolish enough to use the communications grid. He should have visited Omaki personally, but he hadn’t been thinking properly, and he had been distracted—trying to drive, monitor Riki’s movements, and talk to Omaki at the same time.

Jupiter immediately appeared on-screen. “Why is your pet in Midas?” she demanded, her query reminding him that Jupiter would also have access to Riki’s movements through his tracer logs.

“I’ve let him return to Ceres for a week,” he answered, smiling. Although he had always suspected Jupiter monitored his conversations, now he knew with complete certainty she did so. This irked him, but he knew better than to let Jupiter detect his irritation.

“That’s not standard pet protocol.”

“Ah, yes. I can see why you might object. But, he’s a mongrel, so normal pet administration rules don’t apply. I thought it would be good for him to stretch his wings a bit.”

“When are you planning to sell him?”

“I hadn’t really thought about it,” he replied evasively.

“What do you think of the Xeronian?”

“He’s quite obedient. I don’t deserve your generosity.”

"My suggestion is that you sell the mongrel to a Midas brothel and keep the Xeronian. I hoped you would have done so already."

Iason opted not to answer this directly, choosing his words carefully. "I must say, I was a little surprised with your gift."

"Does he not please you?"

"Yes, of course, very much. Only," now Iason paused, feeling at a loss for words.

"You wonder why I sent a Xeronian," Jupiter finished for him.

"Yes," he agreed.

"Because I am aware of your proclivities, and I was hoping he might satisfy some of your more deviant desires so you could dispose of the mongrel. I'm puzzled that you have opted to keep both pets."

Iason, feeling a little disconcerted that Jupiter was "aware of his proclivities," had no immediate reply and for a moment struggled for something to say. He pulled into the parking garage beneath the Eos Tower, waving away the valet who dutifully came to take his vehicle. He parked the vehicle himself, as he nearly always did. As he pulled into his space, he made some pretense at being absorbed with the task of driving, slamming on his brakes for no particular reason as though he had just narrowly avoided a collision.

"Goodness," he murmured, feigning a laugh. "I must pay more attention to the road."

"I am distracting you," Jupiter remarked.

"No, no. I assure you—I can do two things at once."

"Come see me tomorrow at mid-day," she ordered. "I want to talk to you some more."

"As you wish," he replied, his voice low and silky-soft.

Jupiter cut off the transmission and Iason, furious, flipped off the generator. The last thing he wanted was to have Jupiter prying into his private business—especially *now*. For some moments he just sat in his car, fuming. Finally, he got out and made his way up to the penthouse floor, brooding.

Askel and Freyn greeted him at the entrance.

"You really should let at least one of us accompany you when you go out like that," Askel chided him.

Freynd nodded. "We can't protect you if we're not with you."

"When I am going to the auctions, or to a public event, I'll take bodyguards," he replied, a little tersely. "Other than that, please leave the matter up to my judgment."

"As you wish, Lord Mink," Askel murmured, bowing slightly, his face reddening.

The door hummed open and Iason entered. Juthian was already standing in the foyer, as if expecting him. Katze stood nearby, watching, arms crossed on his chest. Juthian glanced a little nervously at Katze and then stepped forward with a low, formal bow.

"Good afternoon, Master Iason. May I get you anything?"

"Yes, Juthian. Some wine, please."

Satisfied with Juthian's performance, Katze nodded.

A little hesitantly, Juthian went to the bar and poured Iason a drink, glad that a wine bottle was already open. He was apprehensive about uncorking a bottle in front of his new Master, especially when his hands were shaking. Iason had already moved to his favorite chair by the fire, and Juthian approached him anxiously.

"Your wine, Master Iason," he said softly, eyes lowered.

Iason took the drink, smiling at the boy's trembling. "Am I so terrifying, Juthian?"

Unsure of how to reply, Juthian glanced back at Katze, who only stared back at him, wanting the boy to answer on his own.

"Yes, Master," he murmured. "A great Elite such as yourself."

Iason chuckled softly. "You have nothing to fear from me, provided you remain obedient, Juthian."

The boy braved a look at the powerful Blondie, who smiled back in a comforting way.

"I imagine this must be difficult for you, going from a pampered existence to the life of an attendant. And you have a new Master. I am sure that must be quite an adjustment. How long were you with Lord Sami?"

"Twenty months," Juthian answered quietly.

Iason raised a brow, a little surprised. Well beyond the one year a pet was typically kept by an Elite.

"Are you still in pain, Juthian?"



"A little," Juthian conceded.

"Then, tonight I will allow you to retire early."

Iason reached into his pocket and pulled out a small, silver pill box. Opening it, he retrieved an O-3, holding it out to him.

"You may take this for pain. However, you may *not* consume any alcohol tonight, is that clear?"

"Yes, Master." Juthian took the pill, holding it a little uncertainly as though waiting for further direction.

"Then, you may return to your quarters."

"Thank you, Sir." Juthian bowed and then backed away, looking to Katze.

"Go to your room, like Master Iason told you," Katze instructed. "Tai will bring you dinner. Be sure you are up before sunrise."

Nodding, Juthian left the hall.

"He's going to work out well," Katze remarked.

"Yes. He's docile and obedient," Iason replied, staring down at his wineglass.

Katze regarded him for a moment. Iason seemed depressed. It was unlike the Blondie to show his emotions—except when he was angry—so it was surprising to see such sadness and worry in his features. "So you really let him go back to Ceres?"

The Blondie nodded, sipping his wine.

"Riki can take care of himself. He's tough, that one."

Iason met his gaze, eyes intense and bright. "He has been in Eos for over two years. Even you must admit he's not the same as he was when I first brought him here."

"True, but if it's a question of Riki versus some other mongrel, I'd still put my money on Riki."

A little comforted by this, Iason sighed. "He's at Depravities."

Katze nodded at the mention of the well-known pool hall and brothel in Ceres. "He's probably looking for his old gang. Bison practically lives there."

"What do you know of his old pairing partner? Guy, isn't it?"

"Not much. He...used to get into a lot of fights, as I recall. Much like Riki. They were quite the pair."

Iason looked up at him, his eyes dark with jealousy.

Katze swallowed, realizing his error. "I only mean, they were both always getting into trouble."

"What does he look like? I suppose he is attractive?"

Katze smiled slowly, his eyes twinkling. "Listen to you, Iason. You're jealous of a mongrel. He probably hasn't had a bath in a week."

"Yes, yes. It's absurd." Iason brought a hand to his head, closing his eyes.

"You'll give yourself another headache. Let it go. He's nothing."

"If he's nothing, why is Riki so anxious to see him again?"

The eunuch fell silent for a moment. "I'm puzzled. Why did you let him return to Ceres?"

"Because Riki wanted it. I only thought...perhaps, if he stretched his legs a bit..." Iason's voice trailed away. He continued to sit with his hand to his forehead, his eyes closed.

"You realize, of course, you've just set the gossip wheels turning. I wouldn't be surprised to hear about this on the Channel."

Iason opened his eyes, looking up directly at him. "I want this kept quiet. I need you to take care of it. Pay Zanbar Su a visit tomorrow. Find out what he'll take to keep this off the Channel."

Katze nodded. "How much should I offer?"

"Give him anything up to...500,000 credits."

"You do realize I can't really stop the talk, unless you're prepared to pay off every Elite in Tanagura."

"Just do what you can."

"I'll try."

Katze fell silent, studying him. He felt Iason's decision to let Riki return to Ceres had been a bad one, but he knew it wasn't his place to say as much. It was clear enough that Iason already regretted it.

"If you have no further need of me," he murmured, finally, "I'll retire to my room."

Iason nodded dismissively, his hand still on his forehead. Another headache was coming on. He sighed as Katze left the hall, feeling almost a little envious knowing the eunuch had a lover waiting for him in his bed.

"Master," Enyu said softly.

"What is it, Enyu?" Iason sighed again, closing his eyes.

“Forgive me, Master, but...might I take a bath?”

Iason then realized with no small amount of chagrin that the poor pet had not bathed in several days while engaging in activities that begged for it. He rose and immediately went to him, unlocking his chain from the floor post.

“You will have to overlook my poor treatment of you, Enyu. This has been an awkward week and you were quite...unexpected. In the future I will make sure that your needs are better met.”

Excited, Enyu jumped up. “Thank you, Master,” he replied, completely aroused merely by standing so close to the handsome Blondie. It was all he could do to keep from pouncing on him.

Iason led the pet to the bath hall. After chaining him firmly to the floor post of the pet bath, he started filling the sunken tub, pouring some aromatic salts into the warm water.

Enyu was beside himself with excitement, desperate to clean himself and anxious to set foot inside the most luxurious bath he had ever seen. It was large enough to accommodate three or four people, let alone one. He watched it fill up, feeling impatient. Even with multiple spouts, the tub seemed to take forever to fill.

“Go ahead.”

Iason smiled a little as Enyu slid into the water with a moan. The Xeronian immediately went underwater, coming up and shaking the water from his hair like an animal.

Enyu’s performance had a predictable effect on the watching Blondie, who was, after all, a hardcore voyeur. His heart began pounding a little faster and, when the Xeronian gazed up at him with a deliberately provocative, inviting stare, he felt the blood surge to his loins. As Enyu stood up and began soaping up his body, Iason made a decision.

He began undressing, much to Enyu’s utter delight. The Xeronian started to tremble with lust as he eyed the Blondie’s beautiful physique.

“Master,” he warned, “I cannot stay away from you, if you come into the bath like that.”

“You do not need to stay away,” Iason replied in Xeronian.

“Do you want something special?” Enyu asked, excited.

“Yes,” Iason answered, stepping down into the bath and then submerging his body momentarily to get wet. Then he stood up, legs apart, hands on his hips, water dripping from his body. His arousal was apparent. “Pleasure me with your mouth.”

Not needing a second invitation, Enyu knelt in the water before his Master. Gazing up at him with dilating eyes, he slowly slipped his hand around the Blondie’s shaft and pressed his tongue to the tip of his organ. He flicked his tongue suggestively, lapping up droplets of pre-ejaculatory wetness that erupted from Iason’s cock.

Breathing deeply, the Blondie watched him intently. “Yes, little pet,” he encouraged.

With slow circles, Enyu continued to tease him by moving his tongue around the head of his shaft.

Iason, suddenly impatient for more intense stimulation, grabbed Enyu’s hair and pressed himself against Enyu’s lips. “Open,” he commanded, his voice thick with lust.

With a naughty smile, Enyu refused to obey, pressing his lips tightly together.

Finding this deliberate disobedience exciting, Iason pulled his head back by the hair and forced himself into the Xeronian’s mouth. “You want me to discipline you, is that it?” he whispered, enjoying Enyu’s mock resistance.

Suddenly unsure if his Master was teasing—and not especially anxious for more ‘discipline’ at the hands of the Blondie—Enyu then opened his mouth fully and sucked so enthusiastically that Iason feared he might ejaculate on the spot.

Enyu slid his hands up his Master’s legs to his abdomen, raking his fingertips across his firm, toned muscles. Iason reached down and caressed his forearms, breathing harder.

When the Xeronian took him deeper into his mouth and began squeezing him with his extraordinary throat muscles, the Blondie pulled out, shaking.

“Stand up,” he ordered.

Enyu obeyed, and Iason lifted him up and laid him down on the edge of the bath, pushing his legs up toward his chest and pinning his wrists to the tile.

"I'm going to be hard on you, pet," he warned. The Blondie then proceeded to enter, watching his pet's face intensely as he reacted to the pain of penetration.

Enyu cried out, but at the same time offered him such a look of obvious solicitation that Iason found he could not hold back. He immediately began nothing short of a barbaric acquisition, easily honoring Riki's mandate that 'cat-boy' be made to whimper.

Iason was beside himself with lust; he was so aroused and pleased by the congress that he began grunting in a manner atypical of his usual, more elegant ascent. "You feel like heaven, little pet," he hissed. "You're so tight I can hardly fit."

Enyu, who was now finding some relief from his initial discomfort, began deliberately provoking him. "Fuck me harder, Master," he whispered, elliptical pupils dilating and constricting in an odd but intoxicating manner.

Needing no additional prompting, Iason abruptly pulled out, flipping Enyu onto his stomach and lifting his hips up to slide him onto his engorged shaft. Once thus positioned, he widened his stance and, pulling back violently on Enyu's hips, began fucking the Xeronian as hard as he could, a project which quickly propelled him past his critical point.

With a loud groan, the Blondie released his hot essence into his pet's embrace, shuddering as spasms of pleasure coursed through his body. Enyu was panting, painfully aroused. He was thrilled with being taken so enthusiastically by his Master but desperate for release. He attempted to fondle himself but Iason grabbed his wrist and then flipped him over onto his back again, pushing his legs apart for complete access. Then the Blondie began stroking him expertly, his technique so perfect that Enyu couldn't remain still.

Uttering a strange, spine-tingling sound that was something between a squeal and a moan, the Xeronian wiggled toward him, thrusting into his hand.

Iason, still breathing hard from his own climax, watched him with fascination. Enyu whimpered—this time from pleasure—in such a pathetic manner that the Blondie leaned down and prepared to relieve his pet.

Enyu, raising his head in surprise, began panting loudly, staring at Iason with wide eyes.

“Master,” he pleaded, reaching out to grab onto his arms. “I’m about to....”

The moment Iason touched his tongue to the pet’s rigid erection, Enyu ejaculated, semen shooting up onto his Master’s lips and face. Enyu arched his back, his head thrown back, crying out with such beauty that Iason shuddered.

The Blondie reached down and splashed some water on his face, cleaning off a surprisingly copious amount of semen.

“I...I am sorry,” Enyu apologized. “I could not help it.”

“No need for apologies.” Iason was suddenly reminded of his first encounter with Riki. Just thinking of Riki, though, put a damper on his spirits. He stepped out of the bath and prepared to retire to his quarters before remembering that there was no one to tend to Enyu. He stood naked and dripping wet as he contemplated this, completely oblivious to his leering audience.

“Master, you have an extraordinary body,” Enyu purred, lying comfortably in the bath and eyeing him with admiration.

Iason smiled but made no reply. He enjoyed his pet’s flattery and wished that Riki would be equally generous in his compliments.

Sighing, he stepped back into the bath to wait for Enyu to finish. Thrilled that the beautiful Blondie had joined him again, Enyu smiled, humming a haunting little tune as he washed his hair. Iason leaned his head back against the side of the bath and closed his eyes, wondering where Riki was and what he was doing.



RIKI COULDN'T BELIEVE IT. He was really back...and he was *free*. Just being relieved of the pet ring's restriction filled him with excitement and a powerful longing to pull over somewhere and masturbate, just because he could. But he was also anxious to find his gang, and so he sped through the slums, confident that he would find Guy and the others at their old hangout, Depravities.

As soon as he pulled up to the club, he knew he was right. He recognized Guy's bike instantly by the skull and crossbones painted on its side. Bringing his bike to a skidding halt, he smiled at the attention he was getting. No one there had ever seen a Skywalker before, at least outside of a store window, and he knew it.

With pride, he eased off the bike, and with the press of a tiny remote control, he activated the shock guard. Immediately a red laser encircled the bike, its low hum warning any would-be thieves that the bike was protected by a high voltage shield.

Everyone watched to see who the mysterious biker was, and when Riki pulled off his helmet, an excited murmur spread through the small crowd of onlookers. He entered the club, and stood just inside for a moment, perusing the scene.

The club seemed almost exactly the same as when he had last visited it. It was noisy, as usual—a familiar jumble of rough conversation, laughter, music and the hypnotic crack of billiard balls. A live band played a dirty funk in the corner of the hall while two pets engaged in sexual congress on an elevated platform. Riki drew less attention inside, where nearly everyone was occupied with some pursuit or another.

He scanned the hall until he saw a familiar face—Noris. He was sitting in a round booth; Sid was sitting to his right. To his left, with his arm around the same mongrel Riki had seen him with in Midas, was Guy. He was laughing, leaning forward and saying something to the others that appeared to generate considerable mirth.

His heart pounding, he slowly walked toward the table, helmet under one arm.

Noris saw him first and was so surprised that his cigarette fell from his mouth.

"Fuck!" he yelped, brushing his leg where the burning embers had fallen.

Guy was so amused by this that he nearly fell out of the booth, laughing hysterically—a familiar, contagious sound that Riki remembered well.

With a little smile, he approached the table just as Guy finally realized what Noris was so worked up about.

The look on his face was priceless. Stunned, he simply sat there for a moment while Riki stood, staring down at him.

“Riki?”

Guy’s partner appraised Riki with obvious disdain, jealousy flashing darkly in his eyes.

“It’s been a long time,” Riki said softly.

“Fucking...where the hell have you been?” Guy leapt to his feet, not even waiting for Noris and Sid to move out of the way but walking across the table and jumping down in front of Riki.

“It’s really you,” he breathed.

“Yeah.”

They stared at each other for a long moment, their eyes conveying a thousand emotions that their rather terse conversation failed to capture.

Then Guy stepped forward and hugged him tight. “I’ve been worried sick about you,” he exclaimed, and then added, a little angrily, “Where the *fuck* have you been? Why didn’t you call me?”

Riki gave no answer, his gaze gravitating to Guy’s new partner, who now regarded him with unveiled jealousy and mounting anger. He broke the embrace first, after whispering in Guy’s ear, “Your boyfriend is getting a little upset.”

“He’s not—” Guy began and then lowered his voice to the softest whisper, “not *officially* my boyfriend.”

“Well, your unofficial boyfriend looks about ready to implode.”

Guy turned around, attempting to pacify his partner with a reassuring smile. “This is *Riki*,” he said, as if the name already had significance to the watching youth. “Riki, this is Kei.”

Kei nodded slightly to acknowledge the introduction, but his eyes gleamed with unmistakable hostility.

Riki nodded, feeling a little awkward. Though, of course, he had already seen Kei with Guy the day before, in Midas, he hadn’t really thought about having to deal with a rival for Guy’s affections. This *Kei* seemed decidedly unfriendly. He was also annoyingly attractive: his hair was just past his shoulders, dark and tousled, and his features were intense and serious, his dark eyes piercing and his mouth curled in a half-smile of contempt.



“Join us,” Guy insisted, sliding in past Sid and Noris to his place, and holding an inviting hand out to Riki.

Riki slid in next to Luke, who was sitting to Kei’s left—eliciting a look of disappointment from Guy and victory from his partner.

“So what have you been up to?” Noris asked. “We’ve been hearing all kinds of...*bizarre* rumors.”

The others snickered at this, and Riki tried to cover his discomfort with a smile. Had they heard he was the pet of Iason Mink? Or was there some other rumor floating around?

Riki shrugged, pulling out his smokes and, after taking one, offered them to the others.

“Holy shit,” Sid exclaimed. “Dark Baccalias!”

“Holy smokes is more like it,” Guy quipped, grinning. “So when did you start smoking like an Elite?”

“A while back.”

Riki held out the pack to Kei, who shook his head as though completely unimpressed.

At that moment an attendant came to their table, which surprised everyone, because typically they had to practically assault one to get service.

“Can I bring you anything?” he asked, looking directly at Riki.

“Stout. A round, for everyone,” he replied, motioning to the others.

“Certainly. A round of stout,” the attendant repeated, looking a little nervous. “How will you pay?”

“Credit.”

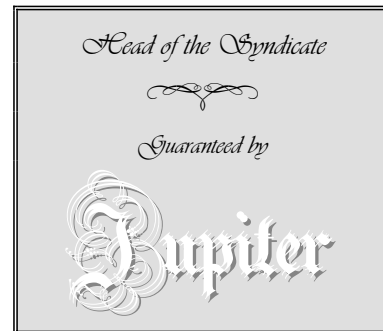
“Credit?” The attendant blinked, studying the mongrel for a moment. He had been instructed by Lord Ghan to immediately wait on anyone *new* who appeared in Depravities that week, and something about the Blondie’s orders—which had been repeated several times—made him nervous. He hardly knew what to make of a mongrel who had a credit portfolio.

He held out the hand encryption board and Riki pressed his hand onto it, much to the complete surprise of his gang. The attendant read his signature and the accompanying text, a look of fear pressing into his features. The signature read:

---

**Credit Portfolio: Approved for Immediate Sale**
**Pet:** Z107M**Class:** Unclassified/Import**Name:** "Riki"**Owner:** Iason Mink **Residence:** Eos**Credit line:** Open ended; 750,000 credits available immediately.

**ALERT:** Identity is to be kept  
CONFIDENTIAL. Merchants who  
comply will be generously compensated.  
Those who disobey this mandate will be  
dealt with severely and personally by  
**LORD IASON MINK.**



Z107M-U/I-Eos-IM-OE-A

The attendant appraised Riki for a moment, eyes wide. "Very good, Sir. I'll be back with your order right away," he murmured, and with a slight bow, backed away.

"Very good, *Sir*," Noris immediately repeated in a mocking tone. "Like, since when did you become a prince?"

Riki smiled as the others laughed.

"Yeah, how did you get a credit portfolio?" Luke demanded.

"I have...my ways."

"Fine. Holding out on us, are you?" Sid accused.

Riki lit up, taking a long drag. The others did the same.

"Smooth," Guy remarked. "Shit. Now you've ruined regular smokes for me."

"How much does a pack of these cost, anyway?" Noris asked.

Riki shrugged. "1000 credits or so."

"A thousand! And you can afford to smoke these regularly?"

"Riki," Guy pressed, a little urgently. "Where have you been?"

"Yeah, did you leave Amoi?" Sid asked.

"No," Riki answered, avoiding the first question.

Everyone waited, but he remained quiet.

"Oh, so you're being all mysterious about it, then," Guy sighed.

The attendant returned almost immediately with the drinks, again surprising everyone. They were accustomed to being treated rather rudely, and they all knew that the difference in their service had to be due to Riki's presence.

"I'll pay for my own—and Guy's," Kei announced, tossing a few paper notes onto the table.

"Whatever." Riki shrugged but just let the money sit there.

The others seemed delighted with their free round of drinks and made a toast to Riki's return.

"To Sir Riki!" Sid cheered, grinning.

"Sir Riki!" came the laughing rejoinder, as everyone—except Kei—drank to Riki the Dark.

"You're not gonna run off again now, are you?" Noris asked.

Riki made no answer, taking another long drag.

"Riki? You're back, right?" Guy pressed, a little anxiously.

"For a while."

"How long is awhile?"

Riki shrugged again. Luke punched him in the arm. "You haven't changed a bit, ya wise ass."

"Why are you being so mysterious?" Guy demanded. "Why don't you tell us where you've been and what the fuck is going on?"

"That's my own business," he replied quietly.

"Oh, it's *your* business?" Suddenly Guy looked decidedly angry. "How do you think I felt when you just disappeared, Riki? I had no fucking idea where you were or if you were ever coming back again. Do you have any idea what I went through?"

Kei slid a hand possessively down Guy's thigh in an attempt to elicit his attention.

Everyone else at the table squirmed a little uncomfortably, feeling that a scene was about to erupt that was best played out between the two old lovers somewhere else.

Riki was staring down at the table. He took another drag, and then looked directly at Guy. "I am sorry, Guy," he answered softly. "Perhaps...we can discuss this somewhere in private?"

"Yeah," Guy nodded, softening a bit. "Yeah, we can do that. Where are you staying?"

"I'll get a hotel somewhere."

The others laughed.

"A hotel?" Noris repeated, snorting. "You've really come into a fortune, haven't you, Sir Riki?"

"Then...I can help you settle in," Guy offered.

"Sure."

"Are you coming over tonight?" Kei demanded, looking a little irritated with the "date" that had just been made while he was sitting right there.

"Don't know," Guy answered, glancing over at Riki.

Kei shot Riki a withering look and then turned back to Guy. "Well, I'm outta here. I've got a package to deliver. Give me a kiss."

Guy bent his face up dutifully, but Kei had in mind something a little more intimate than just a peck. He prodded Guy's mouth open with his tongue, kissing him long, slow and hard, while he slid his hand up his thigh, resting just below his genitals. Resisting initially out of embarrassment, Guy eventually began to respond, enjoying his lover's kiss.

Kei broke away, gazing over at Riki with a look of triumph mixed with a warning. The mongrel stared back defiantly, refusing to be intimidated by him. Kei stood up and squeezed his way out, his body brushing against Riki as he left the booth.

"See ya," Noris said, and the others nodded.

"I think he was a little pissed, Guy," Luke remarked, after Kei was out of earshot.

Noris snorted.

"Just a little," Sid laughed.

"He'll get over it." Guy looked at Riki with unrestrained longing. "Let's go," he whispered.

"Now?"

"Yeah. I really want to talk to you. *Alone.*"

"Yeah, okay." Riki stood up.

"We'll see you around tomorrow, then?" Sid asked. "You're not going to disappear again?"

"I'll be around," the mongrel replied with a wink. Guy moved out of the booth, wanting to put his arm around Riki but feeling a little reluctant. They went outside to get their bikes.

Guy stopped in his tracks when he saw Riki's flashy hoverbike. "No way. A Skywalker?" he exclaimed in disbelief. "Is it stolen?"

"It's mine."

Guy shook his head. "You're going to tell me what the hell's going on, Riki," he warned, shaking his finger at him. "I'm going to *make* you, tonight."

Riki grinned at his threat, putting his helmet on and lowering the shock guard shield. He started the engine and waited for Guy to join him, and then they sped off into the streets of Midas.



RAOUL ENTERED HIS APARTMENT QUIETLY, HOPING to surprise Yui. The aroma of the evening meal made his mouth water; Yui was an excellent cook, and Raoul was famished.

As he crept into the kitchen, Yui immediately sensed him, turning and gifting him with a heart-stopping grin.

"Master!" he exclaimed, delighted.

"Come here."

Yui immediately obeyed, putting aside what he was working on. Raoul reached down and kissed him gently on the lips. "I have something for you."

A tiny mew announced the nature of this "something," and Yui squealed with delight as Raoul pulled a tiny kitten out of his pocket.

"For me?" Yui accepted the fluffy present with utter delight, holding him carefully in his hands.

"You said you get lonely during the day, so...."

Yui looked up at Raoul, his eyes shining with tears. "Thank you, Master. You're very good to me."

“But *you* must take care of it. I have no patience with animals and don’t know the first thing about taking care of them.”

“I will. And he won’t be any,” Yui began and then hesitated. “Is it a he?”

“I...don’t know,” Raoul confessed.

They both examined the kitten for a moment.

“I still don’t know,” Raoul admitted, confused.

“I think it’s a boy,” Yui pointed to an area of significance to proper gender identification. “See?”

“Ah. Yes.”

“He won’t be any trouble, Master, I promise!”

“He’d better not be, or I shall have to punish you.”

“Punish me?” Yui grinned.

“Yes. Turn you over my knee and give you a good, hard spanking.” Although Raoul was only teasing, the thought of having Yui over his knee, ass bared for punishment, was undeniably stimulating. He adjusted himself, already looking forward to taking the eunuch to his bed again that night.

The kitten mewed, eliciting smiles from them both.

“Where...did you get him?”

“I found him. I was down by Tanagura Medical and he just wandered out from under a bush and sat at my feet, looking up at me. Then he started making...that little sound.”

The kitten mewed again, as if on cue.

Yui giggled.

“Yes. That one,” Raoul smiled.

Then Yui frowned. “What were you doing at the hospital?” he asked, suddenly worried.

“That’s my second surprise for you, Yui. I can’t guarantee it’s going to work out, but I’m trying to make arrangements for you to undergo reconstruction.”

Stunned, Yui stared back at him, speechless.

“Would that please you?”

“I...don’t know what to say. You mean...restoration?”

“Yes.”

“So...so that,” Yui fell silent, unable to articulate his thoughts.

Raoul slid his hands down Yui's side to his hips. "So that I can pleasure *you*, Yui." He leaned closer, kissing his neck and then whispering in his ear. "I want to hear you climax."

Yui gasped, unconsciously squeezing the kitten a little too tightly and eliciting a mew of complaint.

"Put it down," Raoul commanded.

Yui put the kitten on the floor, and for a moment the creature simply sat there, legs wide apart, looking around. Then he began happily exploring.

Raoul prodded Yui's mouth open with his tongue, kissing him slowly, insistently. "I want you now, Yui."

"Yes, Master," Yui whispered. "But...dinner?"

"Mmmm." Now Raoul hesitated, his stomach reminding him of his hunger. "That's true. Let's eat first. But then I'm taking you...again and again."

As if to emphasize this, Raoul pulled him close, guiding his hand down to his erection so Yui could feel his arousal. He nibbled on the youth's neck, biting a little too hard in his enthusiasm.

Yui cried out.

"Did that hurt you? Oh...but...I'm going to take you hard tonight. Please forgive me."

"I am yours to do with as you please," Yui answered.

Raoul closed his eyes, sighing as he wrapped his arms around the boy. "Oh, Yui. What are you doing to me?"

Yui blinked a few times, having no answer for this. He snuggled up to his Master, enjoying their embrace.



"UNDRESS," KATZE COMMANDED. He studied Daryl for a moment and then frowned. "Are you up for this? I don't want to push you if you're not feeling well."

"I'm fine," Daryl answered, tugging off his shirt. "And I want to."

Katze watched, hands on his hips. He was thrilled to have Daryl back and even more thrilled to be staying with him in the same

room...and the same *bed*. He had wanted to take Daryl earlier but their reunion had been delayed when Odi insisted they be configured for the new security system. Then there had been some sort of computer glitch. Daryl had helped Odi with it but afterwards had been so tired that Katze had insisted he rest.

Only now, after Iason had returned from Ceres, did the lovers finally have a chance to be alone.

“Aren’t you getting undressed?” Daryl asked.

Katze answered this by attempting to rip off his shirt but immediately froze, wincing.

“You might have to help me.”

“Poor baby,” Daryl cried, standing up and helping Katze remove his shirt. “Are you sure *you’re* up for this?”

“Hell yes. And I have a surprise.”

“A surprise?”

With a mysterious smile, Katze unzipped his pants and kicked them off, and then opened a dresser drawer, retrieving a strange-looking device. He proceeded to strap it on, fastening it at his waist and then lower, on his hips. A silver, oval plate hung low on his pelvis, between his hip bones. With a flip of a switch the plate began to glow red, emitting a low hum.

“What’s that?” Daryl gasped.

Katze smiled, tossing a similar device to him. “Put it on.”

“But...what is it?”

“Obey me!” Katze threatened with a sexy smile.

“How does it go?” Daryl wondered, fumbling with the straps.

Katze climbed onto the bed and helped him with it, and then flipped the device on.

Daryl moaned loudly. “Oh, Katze! I feel...I feel...*something!*”

“Yes,” Katze grinned. “And you’re going to feel a lot more. This is the surprise I told you about.”

“Ah!” Daryl squealed, overwhelmed with the sensations now coursing through his body. “It feels *good!*”

Katze slid on top of him, kissing him with such passion that Daryl felt as though he were melting in his arms. He slid his hands down Katze’s back but stopped when he felt his lash marks.



“Oh Katze!”

“Hush,” Katze scolded, silencing him with another kiss. “It was nothing, love.”

“That’s a lie!” Daryl was close to tears.

“It’s over now, sweetheart,” Katze soothed, running his hands through his hair. “Forget about it. Love me.”

“But,” Daryl began, but then Katze stuck his tongue into his mouth, forcing him to return his kiss. Daryl moaned in his mouth.

“Feels good, doesn’t it?” he whispered.

“Yes,” Daryl conceded. “Yes, it does.”

“Let me try something. Open up,” Katze said, prodding his fingers into his mouth. Daryl sucked on him eagerly, and then Katze spread his legs apart with his knees, reaching down to insert a finger as he kissed him.

The grey-eyed youth arched up against him with pleasure, shivering. Wiggling his finger around a bit, Katze proceeded to bite and kiss his neck.

“Oh!” Daryl shouted suddenly. “Katze, I—I...”

“Let it happen,” Katze whispered, excited.

“I don’t know how!”

“Just relax, give into it. Come on, sweetheart.”

“Ahh,” Daryl moaned, closing his eyes.

“That’s it. Just like that,” Katze encouraged, kissing and sucking on his neck.

“Ahh, Katze! Something...something’s *happening*.”

“Yes, love,” Katze breathed. “Let it.” He was now extraordinarily aroused himself but wanted to hear Daryl climax first.

“Oh, Katze...ohhhh,” Daryl began writhing, arching his back. “Oh yeah. It’s amazing...Katze...it’s—ahhhh!” With a sudden moan of pleasure, Daryl experienced his first orgasm, a sensation he never could have even imagined possible.

Hearing his lover’s release, Katze stopped resisting the device and allowed it to take him to his own peak, his entire body shuddering as he groaned his ecstasy.

“We just climaxed,” Daryl said, in disbelief. “Didn’t we? How is that possible?”

“Alphazanian technology,” Katze replied, rolling onto his back with a slight wince and pulling Daryl to him. “Did you like it?”

“I loved it!” Daryl answered.

Katze kissed his cheek. “There are other things we can try, too. When you’re ready. We can attach certain *devices*.”

“Really? I want to!” Daryl cried. “Can we try it now?”

“We’d better not,” Katze answered reluctantly.

“Why not?”

“These devices...they’re not good for you. They’re dangerous. That’s why they’re illegal imports.”

“Oh.” Daryl was disappointed but somehow not surprised at this news. “Well...I don’t regret it.”

“Good. I don’t either.”

“We just climaxed together...for our first time.” Daryl snuggled up to Katze, enjoying the warmth of his arms.

“Yeah.” Katze smiled, closing his eyes. “I’m so glad you’re back.”

“Me too.”

“Everything’s going to be wonderful for us now, Daryl, you’ll see.”

Daryl nodded, closing his eyes. He was comfortable and safe in Katze’s arms, feeling as though nothing in the world could stand in the way of their happiness. No matter what obstacles they faced, they would be able to work through it.

He felt sure of it.



ENYU WATCHED IASON with mounting excitement. His Master had fallen asleep in the bath, and the Blondie looked so beautiful and enticing that he knew he would not be able to resist.

Slowly, he moved through the water and then straddled Iason, kissing his neck.

Opening his eyes with a start, the Blondie seized him and pulled him off his neck, holding him for a moment as he drifted back into awareness. “Naughty pet,” he whispered, his voice raspy with sleep.

“Punish me,” Enyu replied, his eyes dilating.

Smiling, Iason began stroking himself, finding that he was already aroused. Just being near the Xeronian when he was rutting was enough to give him an erection. "You want me to punish you?"

"Yes, Master."

"And how shall I accomplish that? Shall I take you...*like this*?"

With that, Iason held Enyu's hips and forced him down onto his engorged cock, eliciting a series of whimpers and sharp cries from the Xeronian.

"There. Now I have punished you."

Gasping and grimacing, Enyu could not even reply as he struggled to adjust to his Master's enormous girth. Iason kept tight hold of his hips and forced him to move up and down. The pet cried out in pain, and then, slowly, as he opened up a little, his vocalizations betrayed his growing pleasure.

"Yes, Master," he answered, finally. "Punish me more, like this. Punish me hard!"

"I'll punish you hard," Iason growled, lifting and lowering Enyu violently. He was panting, the Xeronian's pheromones sending him into a frenzied state. "Ah, little pet! You make me come so easily."

"I love it when Master comes. Come for me, Master," Enyu urged, leaning down to bite his throat.

This action proved fatal; ascending quickly, Iason ejaculated so hard that he made a loud sound, something between a groan and a grunt, his rapture heard throughout the penthouse.

Excited, Enyu began pumping himself, ready for release.

Iason opened his eyes and watched him for a moment. "Would you like to try again?" he asked, the look in his eyes leaving no question as to what he referred to.

"Yes, Master!" Enyu cried.

"Stand up."

The Xeronian did so, offering himself to the fair-skinned Blondie, who reached out and pulled him closer. Then, sliding a hand around his width, Iason slowly began pleasuring him with his tongue.

"Ohhh," Enyu breathed, panting. "So good, Master!"

Iason then took him completely into his mouth, eliciting a strange, erotic squawk from the watching pet. Unable to resist, Enyu

reached down and let his hands rest on the Blondie's head, arching back a little as he thrust into Iason's mouth.

"Master...*Master!*"

The Blondie opened his eyes and gazed up at him so provocatively that Enyu released without meaning to, gasping as he threw his head back. He yelped and then made a series of grunts, his semen shooting into Iason's mouth. The Blondie drank him, shivering a little from the sound of Enyu's ecstasy.

Coming back into awareness, Enyu stared down his Master, eyes wide. "You swallowed me," he whispered, astounded.

"Is that so surprising?"

"I did not...I did not expect," Enyu stammered, then fell silent.

"Did you enjoy that, Enyu?"

"Oh," the Xeronian moaned, biting his lip. "More than anything, Master. You are so good to me."

"On the contrary, I fear I have taken rather poor care of you these past few days," he replied. "There really is no excuse."

"I have not been ill-treated," Enyu protested. "Although...I *could* use some clothes, Master."

"Of course." Iason studied Enyu for a moment. The Xeronian was close to Anori's size, and Iason knew the Ambassador's clothes were still hanging in the closet of the sealed-off suite. They were mostly formal silk robes—perfect for Enyu.

Only...he wasn't in a hurry to enter the room. Deciding to have Katze retrieve them, he rose from the bath and found a large towel to wrap around his waist.

"I'll be back momentarily. Is the water warm enough?"

"Oh yes," Enyu replied, sinking down into the tub again and smiling at his Master.

Iason left the bath hall, making for Daryl's room. He started to knock on the door and then hesitated, stayed by the sound of the activity within.

"Let it happen."

"I don't know how!"

"Just relax, give into it. Come on, sweetheart."

"Ahhh!"

“That’s it. Just like that.”

“Ahh, Katze! Something...something’s *happening*.”

“Yes, love. Let it.”

“Oh, Katze...ohhhh!”

Iason stood outside the door for a moment, intrigued. It appeared that *somehow* Katze had found a way to overcome the eunuchs’ rather significant obstacles to sex. He decided to leave them to their prurient pursuits and take care of the errand himself.

Backing away, he made his way down the hall to Anori’s suite. As he approached the room, his heart began beating a little faster. He had not been inside the room for nearly twenty years. With trembling fingers, he overrode the lock code. The door hummed open and the lights automatically flickered on.

At first he remained standing where he was, staring into the room as though he expected to see something. But of course, there was nothing there. It looked like any other suite, nothing extraordinary whatsoever.

Stepping into the room, Iason was bombarded with memories and images. He remembered how he had waited for Anori to return that day so many years before, how every minute that passed had filled him with stronger resolve. He had been so furious...and extraordinarily jealous....



When Anori finally entered the suite, he started at seeing Iason sitting calmly in one of his chairs.

“Iason,” he murmured, his eyes widening.

For a long moment they stared at one another, Iason’s icy gaze conveying his knowledge of Raoul’s illicit union with the handsome, young Ambassador.

“It didn’t have anything to do with you,” Anori sighed, finally. “It was just lust.”

Iason leapt to his feet. “Then this is just revenge.” With that, he plunged a laser-knife into Anori’s stomach and twisted the blade. He withdrew it, thrusting it again into the Ambassador’s heart.

Blood dribbled from Anori's mouth as he stared back at Iason, surprised. Then, his eyes glassing over, he began to fade. Iason pulled out the knife and Anori fell to his knees, frozen for a moment before he toppled over.

Iason stared down at him, breathing hard. Then, the full horror of what he'd done hit him, and he fell back into a chair, dropping the knife. Dark blood pooled around Anori in a slowly widening arc. For a long time, the Blondie simply sat there, unable to move.

"Anori," Raoul called from outside. "Open up already." Then, after a moment, Raoul spoke again. "What kind of game is this? I'm going to have to punish you if you don't open this door right now!"

Iason listened to his teasing, feeling an overwhelming sense of sadness and loss. In that instant, he knew that he could not love Raoul anymore, that what they had shared together had been irretrievably spoiled by Raoul's indiscretion. He wondered if there had been others, or if Anori was the first.

"All right. That's it. You're making me use my secret weapon."

Raoul fiddled with the code-box, forcing the door open through a technique he'd learned at the Academy. The door hummed open and Raoul dashed in.

"You're in for it now! I warned—"

Raoul fell dead silent when he saw Iason, his eyes immediately shifting to the floor, where Anori lay. Blood was everywhere. Speechless, he grabbed onto the bar counter behind him.

"Nice to see you again," Iason remarked, wryly.

Raoul shook his head. "Iason...Holy Mother of Amoi! What have you done?"

"I have taken my blood vengeance, Raoul. We both know why."

Bringing a hand to his face, Raoul remained motionless for a long moment before replying. "Oh, Iason. It didn't mean anything."

"From whose perspective?"

"This...this is going to be a problem. He's not just anyone, Iason. He's an Ambassador."

Iason sighed, closing his eyes. "I know."

Raoul thought for a moment. "This is my fault. I'll say...I'll say I killed him."

“No. I’ll take full responsibility.”

“You have to ask Jupiter for help. She’s partial to you, Iason. Everyone says so.”

The Blondie nodded, at the moment not really caring what happened to him. He felt devastated by Raoul’s betrayal.

Raoul approached him, crouching down. “Please...can you forgive me, Iason?”

“Don’t know,” he replied, honestly.

“How could I have been so stupid?” Raoul lamented. “When I love you so much.”

Iason sighed. He knew Raoul’s sex drive was mostly to blame, but he found it hard to understand how Raoul could claim to love him after the enthusiastic betrayal he’d witnessed only moments before in the Observatory.

“Do you hate me?” Raoul asked, his green eyes wide with anxiety.

“A little,” Iason answered, with an angry smile.

♦♦♦

Remembering that night and all that had happened nearly twenty years before, Iason felt strangely detached, as though it were a mere dream. He went to the closet and opened it, breaking the airtight seal. Anori’s clothes still hung just as they had all those years before, in perfect condition. Iason reached out and selected one—a dark green silk robe with heavily embroidered sleeves. It was perfect for Enyu; he selected it and then sealed the closet again.

When he returned to the baths, Enyu looked up in surprise, eyeing the robe in disbelief. “That’s for me?” he asked.

“Yes. There are others as well, and we’ll go to the tailor as soon as you’re finished with your interval.”

His eyes gleaming with wonder, Enyu got out of the bath, examining his new garment with obvious delight.

“It’s so beautiful.”

“Put it on.”

Enyu dried himself off and obeyed his Master’s command, belting the robe with a long winding sash.

Iason nodded his approval. The Xeronian looked stunning in it, no question.

Relieved to be wearing fresh clothes, Enyu stood tall, feeling rather proud of his new attire. Iason led him back to the hall to chain him up again and then retired to Riki's room for the night.



"I CAN'T FUCKING BELIEVE you can afford this room," Guy exclaimed as they entered the penthouse suite of the Denovian Royal Suites.

Riki smiled, enjoying being able to impress him.

"Look at this place! Holy shit!" Guy stood, gazing around the suite in disbelief. "And it has a full bar, and—hey! That's a holographic projector! We can watch pet porn!"

"Can I get you a drink?"

"Hell yes. What do you think they have?"

"Probably most everything." Riki went to the bar, picking out some brandy for himself.

"Brandy...that looks good...I'll have some of that, too."

Smiling, Riki poured him a glass and handed it to him.

Guy took a sip, his eyes lighting up. "Whoa. This is really good shit. It's so smooth...it doesn't burn or anything."

Riki took a drink and nodded. "Yeah."

For a moment they were both silent.

"Riki," Guy began finally, his voice lowering, "I've missed you...so much. And I've been so worried about you."

Nodding, Riki took out his smokes, lighting one up. "Want one?"

Guy took the proffered smoke but just turned it around in his fingers for a moment.

"I waited for you...for an entire year, you know. Ask anyone. I finally gave up—I didn't think I'd ever see you again."

"Kei seems like a nice guy."

"Yes, but...." Guy shook his head. "He doesn't mean anything to me, Riki. In my heart...there could only ever be you." Guy looked at him with such intensity that Riki felt a little uncomfortable.



"You seem to mean something to him," Riki observed.

"Hmmm."

"That's what it seemed like to me, anyway."

"Well, he's the jealous type."

Riki laughed at this. "Who isn't?"

"I just mean—"

"You're fucking him, though, right?"

Guy studied him for a moment, smiling. "So. You *do* still care."

Falling silent, Riki took a deep drag. Guy put the smoke to his lips and waited for a light. Riki leaned forward, lighting him up, and they stared deeply into one another's eyes.

"Don't tell me...after all this time, you haven't had your hand in the cookie jar?" Guy pressed.

Riki shrugged, feeling disinclined to discuss the matter.

"Is there someone or not?" he demanded.

"Yeah. There's someone." Riki almost choked on the words.

Looking a little disappointed, Guy smiled to cover his angst. "So, who is he?"

"Just...someone."

"And where is this *just someone* right now?"

"At home, in Eos," Riki answered, without thinking.

"Eos?" Narrowing his eyes, Guy stared at him for a moment. "Would that be your home as well, Riki?"

Riki made no reply.

"What, is he some Elite bodyguard or something?"

"Not exactly."

"Why are you being so secretive? What's going on, Riki? Where have you been?"

Riki stared back at him, fear pressing into his eyes. "Stop asking me," he pleaded.

"No. I won't stop asking. I want to know where the fuck you've been and why you haven't called me in over two years!" Angry, Guy slammed his glass onto the bar counter.

"It's none of your fucking business!" Riki yelled back.

"Dammit, Riki! You just left with no explanation and now you come back and expect me to eat up all your bullshit!"

"I don't expect anything from you," the mongrel answered softly, moving away.

Guy grabbed him from behind, holding him close. "Don't walk away from me," he whispered. "Don't you know...don't you get it? Fuck, Riki! I loved you. I still do."

Riki's heart pounded. He could feel his old lover's arousal, his swollen manhood pressing up against him. In that instant he realized that he was not ready to pair with Guy...not yet.

Breaking Guy's embrace, he tried to move away, but Guy grabbed him and pushed him up against the wall. "What game is this?" he demanded. "You know you want me, Riki."

As if to prove his point, Guy slid a hand between Riki's legs up to his genitals, where he found a rapidly hardening bulge. He caressed him and then leaned down and forced Riki's mouth open with his tongue, exploring him hungrily. "I want you so badly," he pleaded, kissing Riki's neck. "I've missed this...god, I've missed this."

Gasping, Riki began to panic. He wasn't ready. Maybe his body was—but his mind wasn't. And neither was his heart. In that moment he realized how much he had changed from the days when he would shaft practically anything that moved. Now he felt as though sex was something to be shared with Iason alone. He found himself silently cursing the Blondie, annoyed that even without his pet ring, he continued to feel the presence of his Master.

"Not tonight," he whispered. "Please, Guy. It's been a long time. Let's take it...a little slower."

His brow wrinkling with confusion, Guy considered him for a moment and then released him. "All right," he agreed, adjusting himself with a pained look on his face. "But I hope you don't make me wait too long."

Riki made no reply to this, but simply moved away, relieved.



IASON SAT UP IN THE GREAT HALL until the mantel clock struck the thirteenth hour. He kept his phone next to him, hoping Riki would

call. When his pet failed to do so, the Blondie contemplated calling *him*, but in the end simply retired to the balcony.

There he took in the magnificent view of Tanagura, its colorful lights and patterns sprawling out seemingly forever. In the distance the fantastic light display of the Taming Tower and the holographic stallion atop the Dark Horse marked the popular Apatian province of Midas. The slums of Ceres were only vaguely suggested at the city's edge by its contrasting darkness. With the exception of a few isolated generator-powered areas, there was little illumination beyond the brightly lit bridge of Ios that led over Manatung Bay, for Ceres had no central source of power.

Riki was somewhere in that darkness.

Deciding to check Riki's whereabouts before he retired, Iason opened the tracer program and saw that he was at the Denovian Royal Suites—a posh, bayside hotel in Apatia, the pleasure district of Midas. He smiled at Riki's choice: the Denovian Royal Suites were where Ambassadors and other dignitaries stayed when visiting Amoi. It was heavily guarded, so he knew Riki would be safe there. He felt a huge sense of relief that his pet had opted to stay in the province close to Tanagura, rather than in some sordid motel or apartment in Ceres. A purchase log confirmed it—a suite for two in the penthouse suite. This last detail made his heart sink a little. He had expected it, but to be confronted with the cold reality of his pet with someone else was almost more than he could bear.

Iason found it impossible to sleep. He couldn't help but brood over the image of Riki with his old lover. The more he thought about it, the more jealous he became. Why had he allowed his pet to return to Midas? What had made him think he could tolerate the idea of Riki with someone else? He tossed and turned restlessly in Riki's bed. Finally, he got up and paced through the penthouse.

He was tempted to get into his vehicle, go find his pet and bring him home. Riki would be furious, he knew. But as his Master, Iason could take away privileges whenever he wished. He didn't owe his pet any sort of explanation.

Just imagining the mongrel's reaction to being carted away, however, put him off the idea. Riki could be quite difficult when he

was angry. Iason would lose all the progress he had made toward winning his pet's trust and affection—he had been so happy and excited about returning to Ceres. As much as he wanted to, Iason knew he couldn't go back on his promise. He couldn't take away Riki's week of freedom.

But the Blondie was miserable, unable to dispel thoughts of his pet in the arms of someone else. Although he had guessed Riki would decide to return to his old pairing partner, it hurt him tremendously that he had apparently done so, and on his very first night away.

Iason finally went out to the gardens of the guest wing, sitting down on the stone bench and staring up at the sky. His eyes instinctively gravitated to the constellation Icaria, and he smiled, remembering how his pet had wanted to find it.

At that very moment, Riki was standing on the balcony of his suite, similarly unable to sleep. He was looking up at the same constellation, thinking of Iason, unable to enjoy his first night of freedom because he missed him terribly. Guy had left earlier when Riki failed to invite him to spend the night. And the mongrel found, once he was alone with his thoughts, that he regretted urging Iason to take Enyu while he was away. Now that he was no longer affected by the Xeronian's pheromones, Riki had a completely different mindset about the situation. He hated the thought of the Blondie with cat-boy. He wanted Iason all to himself. He felt annoyingly jealous about it and wondered if the Blondie had already taken him.

Was Enyu sleeping in Iason's bed? Was the Blondie snuggled up behind him, his warm body pressed against Enyu's backside? Riki found this image troubling; the very notion of his rightful position under his Master's sheets being usurped by the Xeronian was exceedingly irksome, to say the least. He even considered calling Iason to ask that Enyu not be allowed to sleep in the Master bedroom—perhaps even to plead that Iason not take Enyu at all. But then, of course, Iason would demand the same from him. And that would defeat the whole purpose of his week of freedom.

Riki stood, staring up at the stars, and with slow strokes brought himself to orgasm, savoring the absence of his pet ring. Yet, the

irony was that when able to masturbate freely, his thoughts drifted to Iason, his fantasies all inextricably wrapped around the Blondie who had made him his pet.

“Iason,” he whispered, and then, his muscles suddenly contracting, he cried out his release, his voice rising above the calm of the night.

## Deviance and Depravities

IASON SPENT THE MORNING trying to mentally prepare for his interview with Jupiter. He would have to put his best face on and appear calm and unconcerned. His true feelings, however, were anything but; he was in a near panic over what Jupiter wanted, worried that she would insist he get rid of Riki.

Surely even Jupiter had no right to interfere thus in his private life. Yet, it was clear to him now that in sending Enyu to him, Jupiter was asking him to give up his pet.

And that he could never do. He would sooner take on Jupiter herself than allow her to take Riki away from him.

As he brooded over these matters, Odi came on over the intercom, announcing the arrival of Omaki Ghan.

Alarmed, Iason jumped to his feet and rushed to the door, admitting him personally.

On seeing the Blondie's concerned expression, Omaki smiled. "No need for alarm, Iason. I've not come concerning your mongrel."

Visibly relaxing at this news, Iason then regarded him suspiciously. Then his eyes were drawn down to the small boy who stared up at him with wide eyes, clutching onto Omaki's tunic.

"Aki, isn't it? Do you remember me?"

Too terrified to speak, Aki hid behind his Master, peeping out from behind him.

"Say hello to Lord Mink, Aki," Omaki directed.

"Hello," he said dutifully, and then promptly buried his face in his Master's cloak again.

Smiling slightly at the boy, Iason nodded to Omaki. "Come in. Would you like a drink?"

"Have you...any coffee, by any chance?" Omaki looked tired, as though he had not slept.

"Tai."

"Yes, Master," Tai answered, immediately rushing in from the kitchen at Iason's summons.

"Some coffee, please, for Omaki."

Tugging on his Master's sleeve, Aki then pleaded for some coffee as well.

"No," Omaki replied. "No coffee for naughty little boys."

Pouting, Aki looked suspiciously at Iason as though he was at fault for his inability to procure coffee.

"Perhaps next time you'll mind me when I tell you not to bring drinks near the computer," Lord Ghan added.

Aki sulked a little at this, not wanting to be reminded of his watery transgression.

Iason smiled at this interchange but said nothing.

Aki's gaze gravitated to the corner, where Enyu sat with his robe undone, fondling himself.

"Master!" Aki cried. "Can I go look at the naked man?"

"Don't let him get too close," Iason warned. "He's rutting."

"Please?" Aki begged.

"Very well. Don't go past that chair, there, Aki. Do you see which one I'm pointing to? The golden one?"

"Yes," he answered.

"Stay behind that chair. Mind me, Aki, or I'll turn you over my knee and give you a spanking. You won't like it, if I have to do that."

Flinching slightly at this threat, Aki then cautiously made his way over to the chair to get a closer look at Enyu.

Tai brought in the coffee, and Omaki took it with shaking hands.

Iason studied him, puzzled. There was certainly something troubling Omaki. He was not his usual cheerful, teasing self. "So what is it you've come to see me about?"

Lord Ghan gazed at him, a faraway look in his eyes. "Jupiter sent me a summons," he replied. He pulled the summons from his

pocket and held it out to Iason, who took it, alarmed. A summons from Jupiter was never a good thing.

---

## Omaki Ghan

You are hereby ordered to return your illegal pet to Midas Orphanage in Anatung. You will do so immediately. If this mandate is not met in three days, the boy will be removed from you and you will be publicly whipped for insubordination.

So ordered by Jupiter on this the 445th day of the year 5139.



Summons 745932

---

Iason sighed. “Jupiter summoned me as well. Immediately after our conversation.”

“What can I do?”

“You don’t have a choice. A summons must be obeyed.”

Omaki shook his head. “No. I won’t do it.”

“Then he’ll be taken all the same and you’ll be whipped—or worse—just as the summons says.”

Lord Ghan gazed at him, his eyes filled with urgency. “Iason, please. Isn’t there something you can do? Jupiter listens to you.”

Iason began to shake his head, but was struck by the look in Omaki’s eyes. “He means that much to you?”



A more familiar expression pressed into the Blondie's features and he smiled. "Ah yes. One could say...that he means everything to me. I thought that *you*, if anyone, might understand."

Across the hall, Aki approached Enyu, who immediately perked up upon seeing the young boy. His eyes dilated and he began stroking himself a little faster.

"Do you need to use the bathroom?" Aki asked.

Enyu smiled. "No."

"What are you doing then?"

"Making myself feel good."

"Why are you showing your private parts?"

"Because I want to."

"What's that...necklace you're wearing?" Aki pointed to his chest, where the beautiful pendant given to him by Prince Hiroshi hung.

"This? Oh...this is very special. Come a little closer and I'll show it to you."

Despite his Master's stern admonishments to stay behind the chair, Aki was so curious that he stepped forward without thinking.

Enyu immediately seized him, biting his neck and tugging down his shorts. Aki screamed.

"Aki!" Omaki shouted.

He and Iason both immediately rushed to assist him, as did Katze, who had come running when he heard the boy's scream. Enyu already had the boy face down, bottom bared and ready for penetration when the Blondies rescued him.

Iason whipped out his taming stick and with brutal strokes, beat Enyu, who huddled in the corner and howled his misery. At Iason's direction, Katze lifted him up and pinned him to the wall with his arms above his head while the Blondie struck him repeatedly across the back of his legs with his taming stick.

The Xeronian yelped like a punished puppy. Although Iason suspected that Enyu truly could not help himself, he could not let the assault go unpunished.

Omaki scooped Aki up, his initial alarm now changing to fury. "What did I tell you, Aki?" he scolded, pointing to the golden chair behind them. "Didn't I *just* tell you not to pass this chair?"

Then, propping his leg up on the chair, he pulled the boy over his thigh and, after removing his glove, gave him a sound spanking on his bare bottom, much to Aki's complete despair. He spanked him perhaps quite a bit harder than he needed to, but he was angry over how close Aki had come to losing something very special that Omaki fully intended to save for himself. Though Omaki had threatened to spank Aki numerous times before, he had never actually done so, and Aki wailed his anguish and fear, struggling in a futile attempt to escape Omaki's firm grip.

"You'll learn to mind me, Aki! Naughty boy!"

Spanking Aki had a rather predictable effect on Omaki; as he struck the boy's bottom repeatedly and watched it redden, blood began rushing to his own loins, and he savored the experience, knowing full well that he would use it later in the privacy of his room. The combination of the boy's kicking and screaming, the smack of his hand on Aki's warm bottom and the sight of his pink, bare skin was almost too much. Omaki's erection was so rigid he thought he would burst.

At last the punishments were doled out and both Enyu and Aki were left whimpering. Aki, in particular, took his discipline very hard, continuing to wail as though he were still being punished.

Iason and Omaki sat down, waiting for the crying to subside so they could continue their conversation. Aki stood by his Master, sobbing so pathetically that Iason could not help but smile.

"There now," Omaki soothed, finally picking him up to set him on his lap.

Immediately reacting to the unpleasant sensation of anything touching his sore bottom, Aki cried out in dismay, thrusting his pelvis forward and off Omaki's lap as he slid down his leg. He collapsed dramatically facedown on the floor, where he continued to fuss.

"Aki," Omaki chided, although both Blondies were amused at the boy's performance. "Do you want me to spank you again?"

At this, Aki fell silent, lying limply on the floor as though dead.

Iason was reminded suddenly of Riki and wished desperately that the mongrel was with him. "Perhaps Aki would like to see my fish pond?" he suggested.

At this, Aki scrambled to his feet, completely recovered, looking up at him with such an expression of hopefulness that the Blondie could not deny him the pleasure.

“Very well,” he nodded.

“Juthian.”

“Yes, Master,” Juthian answered, his voice trembling.

He stepped forward from beside one of the immense hall pillars where he had been standing, waiting for Iason’s command. He had done nothing when Aki had been seized by Enyu, feeling paralyzed with indecision and fear, and was relieved when Katze came running into the hall. He was a little worried he would be reprimanded for his failure to respond and could not even look at Iason, keeping his eyes to the floor.

“Take Aki out to the gardens and show him the fishpond.”

“Yes, Master.” Juthian looked at Aki and smiled—for the first time since he had arrived at the penthouse. Juthian liked children. At the Pet Academy he had always enjoyed helping the little ones, and though pet children were extraordinarily cute, Aki was adorable too. “Would you like to see the fish?”

“Yes, please,” Aki answered, walking towards him a little hesitantly as he evaluated what sort of threat Juthian posed. His eyes immediately gravitated to the jeweled headdress he wore. “Are you a prince?”

“No. I am only an attendant.”

“Then why are you wearing a crown?”

Katze, who was leaning against a nearby wall with his arms crossed on his chest, smiled at this.

“It’s a headdress, and it was given to me by my former Master.”

Aki looked up at him, suddenly deciding that Juthian wasn’t a threat. He slipped his hand into Juthian’s, and the eunuch smiled.

“Do you remember where the fishpond is?” Katze asked.

“Yes.”

“Can I feed the fish?” Aki shouted, as they made their way down the corridor.

“So,” Omaki began again, crossing his legs and pulling his glove back on. “Isn’t there something you can do?”

“Honestly, Omaki, I don’t know what you expect from me. I’ve been summoned myself, and I have no doubt I’m in for a reprimand.”

“For what it’s worth, I haven’t taken him.”

A little relieved, Iason nodded. “Good. That helps.”

Now Lord Ghan smiled. “Not that I don’t fully intend to, one day. But I guess you could say the time is not quite right.”

“I should think not,” Iason scolded, frowning.

“Come now, Iason. You should give me more credit. I’m not a *complete* degenerate.”

“Hmmm.”

“I admit to having a few fantasies here and there. But I’m not so depraved as to act on them.”

Iason pondered this for a moment. “If you send him back to the Orphanage, you could retrieve him again when he’s old enough.”

Omaki shook his head. “No. I must have him with me. Besides, if I don’t train him myself, he’ll never be suitable as a pet. Look how long it’s taken you to tame Riki. If he grows up in the Midas Orphanage he’ll be wild as a mongrel.”

“Katze grew up there, and he’s a fine attendant. And Yui, Raoul’s attendant, came from the Orphanage as well.”

“I don’t want an *attendant*, I want a pet!”

“Your argument was that if he returns to the Orphanage, he’ll be too wild to tame. I’m saying that just because he grows up in the Orphanage doesn’t mean—”

“Quit being difficult,” Omaki sighed. “I don’t want to send him back. Period.”

“Why don’t you just pick out a nice pet from the Academy? I can give you a private auction, if you like.”

“Don’t you understand? It’s not about acquiring just any old pet. I want Aki with me. I love him. Damn Jupiter anyway.”

“Omaki,” Iason chided.

“What? As if you haven’t had the same exact thought yourself.” Lord Ghan sighed again, letting his head rest against the back of his chair. “If only our old friend Yousi were here. I’ll wager he could help us come up with a fitting solution.”

Iason was quiet for a moment, puzzling over his remark.

“What do you mean? Why Yousi?” he asked, finally.

“Because he claimed Jupiter could be taken down, of course. Surely you haven’t forgotten already.”

A slight jangling of Enyu’s chains reminded Iason that the Xeronian was listening. He stood up. “Come with me,” he said in a low voice, making for the Observatory.

Omaki rose and followed him, frowning.

When they reached the top of the stairs and entered the Observatory, Iason turned to him. “Explain what you meant about Yousi. Be specific.”

“You...never heard about this?”

“No.”

“But Raoul knew about it. He was the one who—I assumed he would have told you?”

Iason shook his head. “Raoul does not reveal to me what Jupiter forbids him to reveal.”

“I see. Then I’ll tell you. Yousi found something in Jupiter’s programming that he believed could be used to shut her down. He did a series of experiments and logged them all, but that was his fatal error. Jupiter pieced together his experiments and figured out what he was up to and...you know the story from there.”

His heart beating a little faster, Iason pondered this for a moment. “What happened to the logs?”

Omaki shook his head. “I only know that he wrote them by hand rather than digitally. In that he was smart, at least. But...surely Raoul would know.”

“He probably disposed of them.”

“Probably,” Omaki conceded. “But,” now his voice instinctively lowered, “why do you ask?”

For a long moment Iason regarded Omaki, trying to decide whether he should reveal his secret.

Lord Ghan arched an eyebrow. “What are you scheming, Iason?”

“I believe....”

“Yes? What is it you believe?”

“I believe I’ve identified a potential weakness.”

“An entry?”

“Possibly.”

“Then...he was right,” Omaki whispered. “I knew it.” He smiled, glad that Yousi had achieved some small victory, even though it had cost him everything. “What do you intend to do with this knowledge?”

“I’ll do whatever may be done to take Amoi back.”

“You seriously think you can bring Jupiter down?”

“I don’t know. But it’s coming to that...for me, at least. And now, perhaps, for you.”

Iason gazed back at him steadily. “I need to know if you would be with me or against me.”

“Let’s see,” Omaki mused. “A second revolution? By my reckoning that would mean anarchy, total chaos, the probable disintegration of our entire social structure and the end of Amoian civilization as we know it.” He grinned. “Count me in.”



KEI PACED HIS FLAT, FUMING. He had waited for hours but Guy still hadn’t arrived. The thought of Guy with Riki infuriated him. Why, after all this time, had Riki suddenly shown up? It was bad enough to have endured countless stories about the notorious mongrel. He was sick to death of hearing about Riki’s exploits and his mysterious disappearance. Now Riki was back, and Kei hated him already. How could a mongrel have a credit portfolio?

And what was it about Riki that seemed so familiar?

One thing he knew: Guy was in for it whenever he finally showed up. Kei had decided some punishment was in order, and to help with this objective he had acquired a thin branch from a tree that he was converting into a switch. He stripped away the bark with a knife, and this activity helped occupy him as he waited.

When Guy finally arrived, Kei was a little surprised. It was so late he had assumed that Guy was spending the night with Riki. The fact that he had the nerve to drop by so late, advertising his indiscretion so blatantly, was infuriating.

“You’re still up,” Guy remarked, waiting to be let in.

"Where the fuck have you been?" Kei demanded, arms across his chest as he stood in the doorway, blocking the entrance. "Don't tell me you've been with that bastard this whole time?"

"Are you letting me in or what?"

Kei stepped aside, though the scowl on his face was hardly welcoming. "I've been waiting for you all night."

"Do you want me to come in or not? Because I don't need a bunch of bullshit now. I'll just go home."

"No," Kei answered, quickly, putting a hand behind Guy and pulling him close. "I want you. Stay."

Guy, still horribly aroused from his unconsummated evening with Riki, surprised Kei by responding enthusiastically, rubbing up against him and kissing him.

Excited, Kei kissed him back furiously. They continued thus for some moments before either remembered that they were standing with the door open for any passerby to watch. Kei pulled Guy inside, and the door hummed closed behind them. With a fist, he slammed the lock box shut, which meant Guy couldn't leave without keying in the correct code.

"You're getting fucked," Kei asserted, unzipping his pants.

Guy answered this by pulling off his shirt, his muscles flexing. "You're getting fucked too."

"I don't think so," Kei smiled. "Don't think I didn't see the way you were looking at Riki. And you've been with him half the night."

Guy looked away. "Nothing happened."

"If that's true, it's only because you couldn't get him into bed."

Guy fell silent, a little amazed by Kei's perception.

"I'm right, aren't I? You're so transparent, Guy."

"I've never lied to you about Riki. You know how I feel about him."

With that, Kei struck him across the face, hard. "Shut the fuck up. Undress. *Now*."

Surprised, Guy stared back at him for a moment, his cheek burning. "Asshole! What did you do that for?"

Kei pushed him up against a wall, then flipped him around and tugged down his pants, pressing against him from behind. "You're being punished tonight, Guy. We both know why." Releasing

himself, Kei slid his cock between Guy's thighs. "I'm gonna fuck you hard," he continued, pulling his head back by his ponytail to whisper in his ear. "And because you've been so naughty, I'm going to discipline you too."

Guy smiled a little at this, enjoying what he thought was a "game" and not realizing how angry Kei truly was. He closed his eyes, shivering as Kei bit down on his neck. Then he felt his arms being pulled behind him, and in the next instant Kei had bound his wrists together with a belt.

"Hey," he laughed, struggling a little against the belt. "Dammit Kei! Let me go."

"Didn't you hear me? You're being punished," Kei shot back, leading him over to the bed and pushing him roughly down on it.

Without his hands to break his fall, Guy fell helplessly, realizing then that his partner wasn't joking about disciplining him. Before he could gather his bearings, Kei had one ankle manacled to the footboard of the bed. Guy struggled with all his might against him with his free leg, but Kei was able to overpower him and manacle the second leg as well.

Guy was lying face down, his pants pulled down to his thighs, wrists firmly bound and ankles manacled.

Straining to lift his body and turn to see what Kei was doing, he was alarmed to see his lover standing behind him, tapping a switch against his hand.

"This will teach you to fuck with me," Kei announced with a sinister smile, his eyes glittering darkly.

"What the hell is that?"

"This? Oh...yes, I spent the whole evening on this, especially for you. This, Guy, is a switch."

"You wouldn't dare!"

"Oh, wouldn't I?" He leaned forward, smiling. "I assure you, I would...and I *will*. Not to worry—it's quite smooth. You won't have splinters at any rate."

"Dammit Kei! Untie me!"

"I will. After you've been sufficiently punished."

"I said nothing happened!"



"Whether or not something happened makes no difference to me. You're being punished for *wanting* something to happen."

"That's fucking twisted! Shit...my circulation's getting cut off!"

"Then I suggest you stop struggling. Accept the fact that you're in for it and take your punishment like a man."

"You're going to regret this. I fucking swear."

"Oh? I don't think so. No, by the time I'm finished with you, you and I will have come to a...certain understanding."

"I'm gonna beat the fucking shit out of you!"

Kei laughed. "I'd like to see you try. Enough of this," he smiled. "It's time for your punishment."

"Kei!"

With that, Kei whipped back his arm and brought the switch down, hard, on Guy's ass.

"Fuck!"

Another strike.

"Bastard! That fucking hurt!"

"Good." Kei struck again, this time drawing blood.

"Fucking asshole!"

Now Kei struck him extra hard, in retribution for his comment.

Wincing, Guy struggled not to vocalize his misery, but a small agonized sound escaped his lips with each strike. Kei's anger became more and more evident; he struck him so hard that, finally, Guy rewarded his efforts with an anguished cry.

"This is just a taste of what's in store for you if you fuck him, Guy."

"Please," Guy whimpered. "Please stop, Kei."

"So...I'm not your official boyfriend?" Kei's voice quivered with anger. "What exactly am I, then?"

Guy didn't answer, mortified that Kei had overheard his comment.

"Just a good fuck? Is that it?"

"Kei," Guy whispered, weakly. Tears were now stinging his eyes, despite all his efforts to retain his composure.

"I've given you everything you asked for, Guy. And then in one night you're ready to throw it all away."

Kei gave him another series of rather brutal strikes with the switch, feeling so angry he could hardly see straight.

“Please!”

“So I mean nothing to you? After everything we’ve shared? Riki only has to set foot in Ceres and you’re ready to dump me?”

“It wasn’t...like that!” Guy tried, desperately.

“Oh? Can you honestly tell me you didn’t try to at least kiss him?”

“I didn’t! I swear!”

Kei laughed, striking him again.

“Fucking liar. You were gone for hours. And I know you weren’t just talking about local politics. Don’t lie to me, Guy.” Now his voice lowered to a hiss. “I could taste him in your mouth.”

“All we did was kiss! I swear!”

“So now you *swear* it was just kissing and before you swore it was nothing at all? Now I’m going to have to punish you extra hard for lying to me.”

Kei acquainted him again with his switch, this time with such sadistic fury that Guy began to beg.

“Shit! Please stop, Kei! Please!”

“I told you. You’re being punished. You need to suffer for what you’ve done.”

“I *am* suffering,” he pleaded. His ass was covered with switch marks, the skin broken and bleeding.

“Not enough.”

Now Guy began to weep, for the first time since his childhood. He had not known he was even capable of crying. Even when Riki had disappeared he had not cried, though he had held his pain and confusion close to his heart.

“That’s it,” Kei whispered. “This isn’t going to end until you submit to me, Guy, and obey my directives.”

“Dir...directives?” Guy stammered.

“You *are* mine, Guy. And yes, I am your *official* boyfriend. You’ll let Riki know that, too. No more fooling around with him. I mean it. I’m not finished punishing you. It’s time for the second part.”

Kei tossed the switch aside. He lowered his pants and then lubricated his cock with a bit of sex gel, tossing the tube onto the bed where Guy could see it. Then he climbed onto his partner and, in one swift movement, penetrated him fully, as hard as he could.

Guy cried out, his eyes rolling back from the pain.

Kei nuzzled his neck as he gave him a hard fucking. "You're mine, Guy. And I think I've treated you very well. But this is what you can expect from me when you fuck with me. You *will* be punished. Do you understand me?"

"Yes," Guy gasped.

"And I'm not just talking about fucking him, Guy. If you so much as look at him the wrong way, or flirt with him the way you shamelessly did tonight, you can expect swift and painful retribution. Is this perfectly clear?"

"Kei," he whispered.

"I said," Kei hissed, thrusting harder, "is THIS FUCKING PERFECTLY CLEAR?"

"Yes," Guy sighed.

"Good boy," Kei whispered, nibbling on his earlobe. "Oh....you feel so good, Guy. I'm gonna come real soon. And then I'll suck you off. Would you like that?"

Although Guy made no reply, Kei knew him so well that he could discern his answer even in his silence.

"I thought so. Now, I think we've accomplished a lot this evening, wouldn't you agree? I think...we're starting to come to a nice...understanding about what exactly our relationship is about, wouldn't you say so?"

Panting, Kei began his ascent. He slipped his hand under Guy's pelvis, lifting his hips.

"Oh, yes. I'm going to come. Aw, yeah. Just like this...so fucking lovely." With that, Kei grunted a few times and then ejaculated, while Guy lay quietly beneath him, feeling humiliated and confused, and—for the first time in his life—completely overpowered.



RIKI AWOKE ALONE, FEELING completely disoriented.

"Iason?" he mumbled, before he remembered where he was.

Sighing, he sat up and pressed a smoke to his lips, lighting it up.

Then he pushed the “coffee” button next to his bed, wondering what would happen.

He heard what sounded like coffee brewing. Fascinated, he watched as a tiny, box-shaped robot emerged from the kitchen, gliding across the floor towards him, the smell of fresh coffee perking him up. The robot rolled to the side of the bed and stopped. Its top slid open, revealing a fresh pot of coffee and a cup.

“Fucking awesome,” Riki exclaimed, pouring himself some.

He needed to decide what to do about Guy. His old partner had been rather insistent the night before, and Riki knew he would not be able to keep him at bay much longer. If he invited Guy over again, there would be definite expectations.

He puzzled over his own hesitancy, surprised by his conflicting feelings. It wasn’t just because of Kei. Although Riki felt a small stab of jealousy—mostly out of reflex—he was strangely unaffected by the knowledge that Guy was pairing with someone else. He didn’t like Kei, because he seemed like an asshole and because Kei deliberately provoked him. But what bothered him more was the idea of Iason pairing with Enyu. His jealousy over cat-boy ate away at him, and he found himself brooding over this more than anything else.

As he sipped his coffee, he came to an important realization, one that he had already acknowledged in his heart long before, even though he had never been forced to confront it directly.

His feelings for Guy had changed.

Although he had become easily aroused when Guy had kissed him, Riki knew this was nothing more than the same reaction he’d have if anyone remotely attractive kissed him. Strangely, though he was relieved of the pet ring, Riki felt as though his body still belonged to Iason, that the Blondie’s hold on him continued whether he wore a thousand pet rings or none at all.

This revelation was disturbing to the free-spirited mongrel. He hated the thought of what he had become. He was the pet of Iason Mink, through and through. And he knew that if Guy learned of this, he would lose all respect for him.

Riki stared down at the little robot that sat quietly at his feet. He drained his cup and set it back inside the unit. The top slid shut, and

the robot spun around and slowly returned to the kitchen. Riki smiled, feeling almost envious of the little bot, whose purpose in life was so simple and clear.

He debated avoiding his gang but knew that would be an unforgivable breach of courtesy. Wasn't that why he'd come to Midas? To see Bison...and Guy? Then, why was he so ambivalent about everything?

"Fuck," he sighed, shaking his head.

Rising, he showered and dressed quickly, putting on the same clothes he had worn the day before. He felt grimy doing so—his years in Eos had inculcated a taste for better grooming, and he decided that a shopping trip for new clothes was warranted. He left the hotel, making for the shopping district.

As he rode through the streets of Apatia, the mongrel was struck by how different everything seemed to him now. It was hard to identify exactly what had changed—he only knew that the city seemed less grand than he had remembered. Tanagura had spoiled things for him; in comparison to the fabulous city of the Elites, even Apatia, the pleasure district of Midas, seemed rather drab.

He pulled up in front of The Chameleon, the posh shop for trendy street-wear that had always been well beyond Riki's means. He couldn't help but smile knowing that now he could purchase whatever he wanted.

His arrival was noticed by the shop owner, Tagira Nomartsu, who immediately recognized the value of the vehicle and rushed to greet him as he entered. "How might I help you, Sir?" he asked, frowning slightly when Riki removed his helmet.

A mongrel? With a Skywalker?

"I need street-wear for the week. The best you have—but nothing too flashy. And...mostly black."

"Certainly. We have a new line in by Zoto Chakra and very interesting imports from Xeron, Aristia and Alpha Zen."

"Let me see them all," Riki replied.

"Of course, Sir," Tagira answered.

Then he hesitated. He wasn't in the mood to spend an afternoon waiting on a customer who didn't have the means to pay. He

couldn't help but wonder if he was wasting time with the mongrel. The bike was probably stolen.

Riki immediately guessed why the shop owner seemed uncertain. "Would you like to see my credit line?"

"Oh! Well...if that would not be *too* much of an inconvenience," Tagira replied. He whipped out his credit board, and Riki placed his hand on the panel, his identification immediately registering.

Tagira stared at the portfolio readout in disbelief—and then alarm. This was the pet of the Head of the Syndicate! With an open-ended credit line. He trembled a little as he read the alert, and then looked up at the mongrel.

"It...it is an honor, Sir...Sir," now Tagira paused, unsure what to call him if he was forbidden to identify him by his pet number. Did that mean he was also prohibited from saying his name?

"Riki," the mongrel finished, smiling.

"Sir Riki. Yes. I...you can have a seat over there, and I'll show you what we have."

"Cool."

Riki sat down, thrilled to be waited on. His attention was drawn to a case of body jewelry, and he smiled, wondering what Iason's reaction would be if he pierced his nipples or his eyebrow. Then he remembered that Iason had once mentioned having his nipples pierced. Perhaps he could have one pierced and surprise him when he returned to Eos.

As he examined the jewelry, his eyes were drawn to a pair of earring studs. The gems were amber-gold but also iridescent, revealing other colors that shifted and changed almost magically. He pointed to the case. "I'll take these too."

Tagira rushed to the case and opened it, nodding his approval. "Those just arrived from Aristia. They're beautiful, aren't they?" *And expensive*, he thought, feeling very happy that Lord Mink's pet had decided to come into his shop.

"Yeah."

"Are you wanting your ears pierced, then?"

"No," Riki replied, smiling. "They're...for someone."

"I see."

Tagira pondered this for a moment, wondering if the pet was buying them for his Master or for someone else. He retrieved the earrings and handed them to Riki and then retreated to the racks to make some initial selections for the mongrel.

Riki studied the earrings, a slight smile curling his lips. He knew Iason would love them. And he wanted to give the Blondie something special to show his gratitude for his week of freedom.

His freedom. Riki sighed, enjoying the knowledge that he could go wherever he wanted and do whatever struck his fancy. He could stay out as late as he wanted, fuck whomever he pleased, or even drink until he passed out.

Tonight he was going to enjoy himself. Whether that meant pairing with Guy or perhaps someone else, Riki intended to loosen up a little. He was entitled. No doubt Iason had already enjoyed Enyu, and Riki felt no small amount of annoyance with himself for being stupid enough to suggest he do so. Images of their probable union crept into his mind again, but he forced himself to push them away, determined not to waste any more time brooding about it.

Tagira returned with an armload of choices, and Riki spent the next hour making his purchases, which Tagira suggested be sent to his room. The mongrel agreed, realizing suddenly that his bike offered little storage space, other than a small compartment designed for sunglasses and other small items.

"Is there anything else I can do for you?" Tagira asked.

"Um...yeah, actually. I'd like to have a nipple pierced."

"Yes, of course."

Tagira paused for a moment, considering. This was the first time a pet had come into his shop unaccompanied by a Master or an attendant, and he hesitated doing anything that the famous Blondie might not like.

"Do you mind my asking if Lord Mink would approve?"

"He'll love it," Riki answered. "He wanted me to have it done before, but I talked him out of it. So he'll be surprised. Plus, he'll love the earrings."

"Ah, very good," Tagira smiled, relieved to hear that the earrings were also for Lord Mink.

He felt a little confused, having heard all manner of rumors about the Blondie's infamous pet. The mongrel seemed to be attentive, thoughtful and anxious to please his Master—not at all what he would have expected from the stories he'd heard.

"Then, I'll have you take off your shirt."

"Right." Riki stripped off his tank, tossing it aside.

"Which nipple?" Tagira asked.

"My right one."

"This will sting a little," Tagira warned, as he rubbed a bit of anesthetic over the nipple and then positioned the piercing unit.

"Are you ready?"

"Go ahead," Riki nodded, yelping rather loudly when Tagira actually pierced him. "Fuck!"

Tagira smiled. "It's going to be sore for a while. But it's in. What do you think?"

Riki looked down at the nipple ring, nodding. "Yeah, that's good. It fucking hurt, though. Shit. Iason *better* like it, or I'll be pissed."

"I thought you said your Master wanted you pierced?" Tagira asked anxiously.

"Yeah, but you never know with Iason. If he's in a crappy mood he might be annoyed that I had it done on my own and use it as an excuse to punish me."

"Oh dear," Tagira murmured. "How likely do you think that is?"

Riki, who had been staring down at his newly pierced nipple, looked up and realized that the shop owner seemed extraordinarily nervous. He laughed. "Don't worry. Sheesh. I'm sure he'll love it. But if you like, I can pay you for the piercing in paper credits. I won't tell him where I had it done."

"Thank you," Tagira replied, relieved. The last thing in the world he needed was for the Head of the Syndicate to be upset with him. Everyone knew Iason's reputation for being nasty when angered. There wasn't an Elite alive who wasn't at least somewhat terrified of the great Blondie.

"I'm going to wear some of my new clothes out of here, okay?"

"Of course. Your total comes to 225,000 credits, plus the piercing, which is 40 credits."



Riki signed the credit board and handed over a few paper notes, tipping the shopkeeper generously.

"Thank you," Tagira said, bowing. "It's been an honor serving you, Sir Riki."

The mongrel grinned, enjoying being treated like a prince. It was such a tremendous change from his former days in Midas when shopkeepers had sometimes even barred him from entering their shops. "No mongrels," some would say, while others—the ones who actually recognized him—would threaten to call the police. Now he was being called Sir Riki, and the shopkeeper was bowing to him.

He changed into his favorite outfit among his purchases: black leather skintight pants, snakeskin calf-high boots and a tank that was covered with slits, reminding him of someone who'd gotten into a bad skirmish with a knife. He especially liked the belt with the dragon-headed buckle and the wrist cuff studded with spikes.

Dressing quickly, he stood for a moment in front of the mirror, admiring himself. He looked good, and he knew it.

He left the shop and was just about to hop on his bike when he did a double-take. Two female pets were walking toward him, and one of them was the pet he had fancied at the Pet Academy party—the one from the magazine Iason had confiscated.

She noticed him right away, blinking a few times. "Riki?"

"Hey," Riki replied, feeling his cock go rigid. The girl was barely dressed, her nipples completely visible through the thin fabric.

"Do you remember me?"

"Of course. How could I forget you?" Riki winked, lighting up a smoke to hide his excitement. "A-987F, right?"

"My name's Ima now. I'm Lord Quiahtenon's pet."

"Lord who?" Riki laughed.

Ima stiffened, looking a bit offended. "Heiku Quiahtenon. The Head of Tanagura Reconstruction."

"Oh! You mean the dude with the bionic arm? *He's* your Master?" Riki cried, excited.

Ima softened, smiling. "Yes."

"He's fucking awesome! I want an arm like that. Only Iason won't let me have one unless I lose mine somehow."

“Let’s go, Ima,” the other female whispered, tugging on Ima’s sleeve impatiently.

“Just a minute,” Ima whispered back. “Quit tugging on my blouse! You’ll stretch it.”

“But,” the female eyed Riki disapprovingly, making no attempt to hide her contempt, “we’ll be in trouble if we’re out too long. And I want to get some shopping done.”

“Go ahead,” Ima answered, “I want to talk to Riki for a bit.”

“Fine. You talk to him. But I’m leaving.”

“Okay,” Ima replied.

The girl left in a huff, giving Riki a dirty look as she left.

“Sheesh. Who was that?” Riki asked, laughing.

“Oh, that’s just Jewel. She’s the pet of Kobin Nu.”

“She doesn’t like me too much, I think.”

Ima shifted her weight, thrusting her chest forward a bit. “Well, *I* like you.”

“Yeah?” Riki took a deep drag, his heart pounding faster.

Ima smiled up at him, batting her eyelashes. “When do you have to get back?”

“I don’t. Iason gave me a week to do whatever I feel like.”

“Really?”

“Yeah, I’m staying at the Denovian. Wanna come to my room?”

“Sure,” Ima purred. “My Master *owns* the Denovian.”

“No shit? Damn. I can’t impress you, then.”

Ima laughed. “Actually, I’ve never even been inside it.”

“Really? He doesn’t live there?”

“He has a penthouse suite in one of the complexes, but he almost never stays there. We live at his bayside estate. See those golden domes?” She pointed toward an immense, elegant building situated near Manatung Bay. Though it was quite some distance from where they stood, it was so large that its domes and towers could be seen all the way in Apatia.

“Shit. You live there? That building is freaking awesome.”

“Master is very proud of it,” she replied, smiling. “He says it’s even better than Lord Kahn’s estate.”

“Who’s Lord Kahn?”

Ima giggled. "You're funny, Riki. Everyone knows who Lord Kahn is. He's a Blondie! *Xanthus* Kahn."

The mongrel took another drag on his smoke, shrugging. "I don't give a crap about any of those Elites or Blondies. They all have corncocks stuck up their asses."

"Riki!" Ima scolded, giggling again.

Riki smiled, eyeing Ima's body. "So, there's no chance that your Master would be at the hotel then?"

"No. He's at the hospital. He works all afternoon."

"You won't be recognized?"

She shook her head. "He hasn't even shown me at a Party yet. I had to beg him to let me go shopping with Jewel."

"Hop on, then." Riki grinned, handing her his helmet. "Wear this."

"Will it mess up my hair?"

"Nah. Anyway, we'll be there in just a few minutes."

Riki tossed his smoke aside and climbed on the bike, and Ima got on behind him, putting her arms around his waist. She pushed her body close to his, her breasts pressed tightly against his back. All Riki could think about was getting her up to his room and fucking her senseless.

"Hold on." Riki started up the Skywalker and sped off.

"Wheeee!" Ima giggled, her laughter making the mongrel smile.

When they reached the hotel, he took Ima up to the penthouse and there did to her every single thing he'd wanted to do since he first set eyes on her centerfold. He violated every possible orifice, fucking her so thoroughly that for the first time the little sex-kitten felt truly satiated.

"Riki," she whimpered, biting her lip as she climaxed.

"You needed a good fucking," he remarked. "That was good, huh?"

"Yeah," she answered, trying to catch her breath.

"I could fuck you all day and all night." The mongrel was thrilled to feel the return of his sexual prowess and endurance. With Ima, he was in complete control. Only with Iason had he been completely unable to control his response or keep from ejaculating almost the moment he was touched. Fucking Ima was exactly what he needed to regain his former confidence.

"I have to get back."

"Truly?" Riki rolled onto his back, lighting up a smoke, and running a hand down her thigh. "I love your body. Stay for a while. I wanna violate you again."

"Can't," she sighed, sitting up and zipping up her thigh-high boots. "If I don't get back soon, Master Heiku will be angry."

"Come on. I want you to suck my cock again."

"Riki! You're so bad," she scolded.

"What? I'm asking nicely. Please?"

Ima smiled, slipping on her flimsy, transparent bikini top.

"Why even bother dressing? You can see everything." Riki teased, reaching out and putting his hands on her breasts.

"Stop," she protested, "or I'll pull your nipple ring."

"You wouldn't dare," Riki laughed, putting a hand protectively over his sore nipple. "Shit, this thing burns."

"You look sexy with it, though." Ima stood up, wrapping her skirt around her hips.

Riki groaned, fondling himself. "I'm getting turned on again just looking at you. Please, Ima? Stay?"

"No, Riki!" Ima laughed. "I'm going."

"I'll be here all week. Can you come again?"

"I don't know. I'll try." She leaned down and gave him a kiss.

Riki smacked her on the ass. "You'd better."

"Ow! Naughty Riki!"

"No, *you're* the one who's naughty. That's why I want you to come back again."

Ima rolled her eyes at this, blowing him a kiss before she walked out. Riki sighed, lying on the bed for a few moments as he replayed the afternoon in his mind. He'd enjoyed himself, no question. But the moment Ima was gone he felt empty—and a little guilty. He knew that since she was a pet, Ima was technically off-limits. He also knew that Iason would be horribly jealous and angry if he ever found out what he'd done with her. He brooded about this for a while, hoping that he could keep Iason from ever finding out.



RIKI MADE FOR DEPRAVITIES that evening, once he'd cleaned up. His arrival was acknowledged by most of those standing outside the club. The rumor that Riki the Dark had returned to Ceres had spread fast, and now he was watched with a good deal of curiosity. Numerous strange rumors had circulated regarding the mongrel, and for Riki to suddenly show up, displaying such affluence, was of great interest to many.

Riki passed by the onlookers, oblivious to the attention he generated. He removed his helmet and stepped inside the club.

This time, he was immediately hailed.

"Sir Riki!" Noris called, motioning to him. Sid and Luke both laughed, but in a friendly way, hailing him as well.

Riki sauntered toward the table, his eyes gravitating to Guy, who sat with his eyes averted. Kei sat next to him, his arm possessively thrown over his shoulders. Guy did not look up. Riki's gaze shifted to Kei, who watched his approach with unveiled contempt.

"You're back!" Sid exclaimed. "I was hoping you'd come. Let me bum one of your smokes!"

"Hey yeah, me too," Noris chimed.

Smiling, Riki threw his pack on the table. "You can have them," he announced. "I'll order more with our drinks."

"You buying again?" Luke asked, grinning.

"Holy shit. Look at his outfit," Noris remarked.

Everyone looked, even Guy.

"Wow. You look *fine*, Riki," Sid said.

"What the fuck does that mean?" Noris demanded.

"What? You're the one who noticed him first!"

Noris punched him in the arm.

"Ow," Sid complained, holding his arm.

Riki slid in next to Luke and managed to briefly lock gazes with Guy. He could tell something was up just by the look in his old partner's eyes. Guessing that he'd gotten into a fight with his new lover, Riki turned to Kei, who was staring at him rather intently.

"See something you like?" he quipped.

"No," Kei replied.

“Humph,” Riki snorted and then, under his breath, “asshole.”

“What’s that?” Kei snapped, his voice rising.

“I said, *asshole*.”

Kei leaned forward, removing his arm from Guy. “Fucking say that to my face, you little prick.”

“I already said it to your face, or was that your ass? You’re so ugly it’s hard to tell.”

A complete lie; the youth was stunningly handsome, but Riki hated him already.

“You piece of shit.” Kei leapt to his feet.

“Bring it on,” Riki retorted.

“Hey now,” Guy interjected, trying to calm his lover down.

“Yeah, chill out, both of you,” Noris remarked, lighting a smoke.

“Let’s not get off to a bad start here.”

At that moment the attendant arrived.

“Can I bring you anything, Sir?” he asked, addressing Riki.

Noris snorted at this appellation, once again finding it amusing. This seemed to diffuse the situation between Riki and Kei. The dark-haired youth sat back down, but continued to glare at Riki.

“A round of drinks for everyone. I’ll have a brandy.”

“A brandy, woo hoo,” Sid teased. “Perhaps I’ll have some *wine*.”

“We don’t serve wine at Depravities,” the attendant replied, not realizing he was joking.

“I’ll have a brandy, too,” Noris said.

“Me too,” Luke said.

“We’re all having brandy,” Sid announced.

“And...bring me six packs of Dark Baccalias.”

This brought cheers and smiles of appreciation from everyone but Kei.

“I’ll have a stout,” Kei said. “Separate tab. One for both of us,” now he gestured to Guy.

“And what will you have?” the attendant asked Guy.

“I’ll have...I’ll have a stout, too,” he answered, quietly.

Kei smiled at this, shooting a triumphant look at Riki.

“Why the fuck should I care what he orders?” he murmured.

“What’s that?” Kei demanded. “Were you addressing me?”

“Very good. I’ll be back momentarily,” the attendant said, bowing toward Riki. “Shall I put everything on your portfolio again?”

“Yes.”

“Excellent, Sir.”

Snorting as though this was the most hilarious thing he’d ever heard, Noris now proceeded to tease Riki relentlessly. “So, *Sir* Riki, I think you’ll find our brandy here is *most excellent*.”

“Fucking asshole,” Riki grinned.

“I *said*, were you addressing me?” Kei repeated, this time louder.

“No. Low-life pond scum like you aren’t worth my time.”

“That’s it.” Kei leapt to his feet again, reaching across the table to grab Riki’s shirt.

“Get your fucking hands off me!” Riki hissed.

“Fucking make me!”

The others at the table pulled the two mongrels apart again, scolding and teasing them at the same time.

“You two need to...get along,” Sid remarked.

“Yeah. Why don’t you kiss and make up,” Noris snickered.

“I’d sooner kiss your ass than that mug,” Riki replied.

“Oh?” Noris stood up, making as if to unzip his pants.

Everyone laughed, except Kei. “Let’s take this outside,” he said, his voice thick with anger. “Come on. You and me.”

“You’re on!” Riki replied.

“Whoa. Settle down, you two. Why don’t you resolve this over a game of pool?” Noris suggested.

Riki smiled. “He doesn’t have the balls to challenge the best pool player in Midas.”

Kei scoffed at this. “The best? You’ve been gone a long time, Riki. I’ll have you know I’m undefeated.”

“As am I,” Riki replied, coldly.

“It’s settled then!” Noris announced. “After we have our drinks, it’s Kei versus Sir Riki!”

“A challenge!” Sid cheered.

The two rivals glared at one another for a long moment. Kei finally broke away, leaning down to whisper something in Guy’s ear. The expression on Guy’s face was inscrutable.

Riki studied his old partner, trying to make out what was different about him. Something had happened, of that much he was sure. He'd never seen Guy look so submissive and subdued. He disliked the way Kei put his hand possessively on Guy's thigh, brushing his thumb back and forth.

Riki found that he hated Kei. It wasn't even so much jealousy over Guy. It was a personal thing, the way he challenged his every move and remark. He couldn't wait to give him a sound thrashing at the pool table.

The attendant returned with their drinks and smokes. They all sat for some moments, enjoying them, though one pack remained untouched on the table, for Kei refused to accept the mongrel's gift. Guy, however, picked up a pack and lit up a smoke, much to his partner's obvious annoyance.

A rather strained silence continued for some moments as Kei and Riki stared darkly at one another. Everyone at the table knew that their rivalry promised an inevitable confrontation. It was just a matter of time.



# 10

## Secrets and Lies

IASON DRANK TWO GLASSES of wine to calm himself before entering Jupiter's sanctum. He had spent the morning fretting over what Jupiter wanted but had managed to put on a demeanor that conveyed a relaxed attitude he was far from feeling. Finally, precisely at noon, he entered her chambers, carrying a third, half-finished glass of wine.

He immediately bowed, a little lower than usual.

"Sit down," Jupiter commanded.

He obeyed, the effect of the alcohol now calming him. He crossed his legs in a leisurely fashion, taking another sip of his wine as though completely unconcerned that he had been summoned. In fact, his heart was beating so fast he could hardly think straight.

"What is it you wanted to talk to me about?" he asked, smiling.

"You know quite well. You cannot have two pets. I want you to dispose of the mongrel."

Iason laughed. "Dispose of him?"

"Send him to a brothel or an open club—I don't care which. The Xeronian I gave you should be sufficient to relieve your needs."

"If I am to *dispose* of one my pets," Iason answered softly, "I would prefer to keep the mongrel."

"Why?" Jupiter demanded.

"Don't misunderstand me. I appreciate your gift. It was extraordinarily thoughtful and, quite frankly, rather flattering. I know I do not deserve such special favor. But, to be quite honest, Enyu has been a little disruptive and difficult to manage."

“And the mongrel is not disruptive or difficult to manage?”

“I see your point. But the Xeronian has a rutting period, as you know, and this has proven to be somewhat awkward.”

Jupiter shifted, and Iason steeled himself as she transformed and moved across the room to him, rematerializing and then reaching out to hold his face.

“Do not lie to me, Iason. You have enjoyed the Xeronian.”

Iason lowered his eyes, wondering what Jupiter meant. Was she spying on him?

“Your persistence in keeping this mongrel mystifies me, especially as I have made it quite clear to you my position regarding him.”

Iason looked up, braving a reply. “Please, Jupiter. Grant me this small indiscretion?”

Jupiter was quiet for a moment, studying him. “Why does this pet mean so much to you?”

“I don’t know.” Iason bowed his head again, ashamed.

“You may keep him for one more year, Iason. And then I expect you to dispose of him without my having to remind you.”

Iason nodded, grateful for the reprieve but wondering what he would do when the year had passed.

“You will relocate the Xeronian or return him to me.”

“As you wish.”

“There is something else on your mind,” Jupiter remarked.

Iason blinked, a little surprised that Jupiter was so perceptive. “Yes,” he confessed.

“Tell me.”

“Omaki Ghan came to me. You summoned him?”

“Yes. He has acquired an illegal pet.”

“Of course, the boy is far too young,” Iason agreed. “But, Omaki was hoping that I would speak to you on his behalf. He has developed a special attachment to the boy.”

“You should know better than anyone how ill-advised that is.”

“Yes. But his concern is that the boy will not be well cared for at the Midas Orphanage. Surely you can see his point.”

“He may appoint a Guardian for the interim. I will allow him one month to make suitable arrangements.”

“A Guardian?”

“Yes. A caretaker. Review Section 116.45 of the General Code. Advise Omaki that there are very specific rules of conduct for guardianship and that failure to comply with these rules will result in swift disciplinary intervention. Is that clear?”

“Yes,” Iason said softly.

“Good.” Jupiter shifted again, disintegrating to return to her platform, where she rematerialized in statuesque form.

Iason rose as if to leave.

“There is something more I need to discuss with you.”

Surprised, Iason sat back down, waiting.

“There is alarming news from Alpha Zen. A young commander has seized control of the Senate and, with his entire army, marched into Ultanum, claiming the empire as his own.”

“He claims to be Emperor?” Iason whispered, stunned. The seat of Emperor had remained vacant for over five hundred years. Alpha Zen was an oligarchy, run by its senators.

“He has not claimed the title of Emperor but it appears this is merely a formality. Apparently he is extraordinarily popular. He has been highly successful in his campaigns in the fourth Quadrant and so has the full backing of the military. But the senators and ambassadors are all in a fury over it, and the entire region is considered unstable.”

“I see. This will certainly affect the trade conference,” Iason murmured, considering the matter.

“That is not why I am bringing the matter to your attention.”

Iason looked up, puzzled. “I don’t understand.”

“His name is Commander Khosi.”

At first the name did not register, and then Iason paled.

*Khosi.*

The Blondie’s lips parted slightly.

“Yes. Anori’s brother, Voshka.”

Iason shook his head, as though not quite believing what he was hearing. “What should I do?”

“No action is required. I am simply informing you of the situation. You may go.”

With that, the Blondie rose, bowing slightly before leaving. He found that he was trembling from this news. He did not know what it meant or how it would affect him, but the mere mention of the name Khosi sent his heart racing.

As he headed back to his own chambers, he saw Raoul down on the mainframe level. It was the first time Iason had seen him since their encounter at the Taming Tower. As he approached him, Raoul suddenly straightened, as though sensing him, and then turned and looked directly at him.

Iason came closer and then stopped. For a long moment neither of them spoke.

Finally, Raoul broke the tension, his brow furrowed with concern. "Iason. Is something wrong?"

"Come with me," the Blondie replied, his voice barely a whisper.

Raoul immediately fell in beside him, worried. Iason was clearly upset—of that much he was certain.

As soon as they stepped into Iason's chambers and the door hummed closed, Iason turned to him.

"There's a development. On Alpha Zen."

Visibly relaxing at this and relieved that Iason no longer appeared to be angry with *him*, Raoul raised his eyebrows. "Oh?"

"A commander has seized control of the Senate and declared himself ruler of Alpha Zen."

"Surely not," Raoul replied, frowning. "What, are you serious?"

"Raoul." Iason leaned forward a little. "It's Anori's brother."

At the mention of Anori's name, Raoul fell silent, the blood draining from his face. "His brother?"

"Jupiter just informed me. Voshka Khosi."

"But what can he possibly know?"

Iason shook his head. "But suppose...he has an agenda?"

Raoul lowered his voice. "There's no reason to overreact. As long as we both remain calm, we have nothing to fear. He can't know anything." He shifted his weight and leaned in closer. "Let me help you however I can. Dare I hope that you have forgiven me?"

"Don't push me, Raoul."

Pulling back a little, Raoul fell silent.

"I meant what I said before. You will submit to me in all things, or I shall have you transferred out of Eos."

Raoul shook his head. "What have you asked for, that I have failed to give you?"

"Nothing yet. But when I ask for it, Raoul, you will give it."

The Blondie's eyes clouded with confusion. "Is there something you want from me now, Iason?"

"I want your loyalty and your support."

"Both of those you already have," Raoul answered, puzzled.

"You will back me in all matters from this day forward."

Raoul nodded. "Done."

"In *all* matters, Raoul. Even if what I ask of you goes against your personal beliefs."

At this, Raoul tilted his head, a little smile curling his lips. "Against my personal beliefs? What are you scheming, Iason?"

"Give me your word, Raoul."

"You have it. And I would have given it to you without your threat, Iason."

Iason studied him for a long moment, his eyes gravitating to a series of marks on his neck. "You have a new lover?"

At this, Raoul's face darkened, and he looked away.

"I see. But then, that is your own business." With that, Iason turned and made for his desk, dismissing Raoul with a wave of his gloved hand.

"Iason—"

"That is all, Raoul. Go."

Raoul backed away, his mind a turmoil of emotions. As he left, he dared a last look over his shoulder and caught a glimpse of Iason, just as the door hummed closed. The Blondie was leaning against his desk, staring down at the floor.



"LET'S DO THIS," KEI SAID, rising to his feet.

"Yes...let's." Riki stood up as well, returning Kei's gaze coldly.

The two rivals made their way over to the billiard table. The rest of the gang gathered around and began placing bets.

"100 on Riki," Noris said.

"100 on Kei," Sid announced. "You in, Luke?"

Luke shrugged. "I'll put 50 on Kei."

"50? Cheapskate," Noris teased.

"What about you, Guy?" Sid prodded.

Guy did not answer right away. Both Riki and Kei regarded him expectantly, but he refused to look at either of them. Finally, he looked up, an inexplicable look in his eyes. "I'll pass."

"Coward," Riki scoffed. "Fucking take a stand, why don't ya."

"Don't talk to him like that!" Kei yelled, slamming his cue down on the table.

"I can talk to him however I bloody well please!" Riki shot back.

"That's it. I'm gonna wipe the pavement with your ass."

"Bring it on!" Riki shouted, and the two of them lunged for each other again.

The others once again pulled them apart before a fight ensued, trying to make light of the situation by teasing them.

"Come on now, Sir Riki," Noris scolded. "This is hardly the behavior I expect from a gentleman of your stature."

"He fucking *looks* at me the wrong way, and I'll bloody kill him," Riki warned.

"I'd like to see you try," Kei snorted.

"You—"

"Riki," Guy interrupted suddenly. "Let it go."

"What? Why the hell should *I* let it go?" Riki demanded.

"Because...I'm asking you to."

Guy looked at him with such intensity that Riki finally backed off, shrugging. "Yeah. Whatever." He turned back to Kei, hand on his hip. "So are we playing or what?"

Kei smiled, pleased with Guy's behavior and feeling a little cocky. "Sure. You break."

Riki suppressed a smile at this. He chalked up his cue and then, with disarming ease, broke the nest, sending four balls squarely into the corner pockets.

“Yes!” Noris cheered.

Smiling smugly, Riki continued, pocketing two more balls.

“Shit!” Sid cursed.

Kei watched this performance uneasily, his smile fading a bit. His handheld buzzed and he snapped it open, irritated.

“Yeah?”

His expression immediately changed, his eyes widening. “Shit. All right. I’ll be there...in about half an hour.”

He flipped the phone closed, watching with no small amount of annoyance as Riki cleared the table.

“Yeah, well. I’m outta here. I got an errand to run.” He tossed his cue on the table.

“What, you’re just quitting?” Sid demanded.

Riki straightened, sneering. “He knows he’s beat.”

“Fuck you, you little brat,” Kei snapped. He turned to Guy. “It’s a big order. I may not be back until late.”

Guy shrugged. “And I may not be there when you get back.”

“What? What the hell does that mean?”

Guy turned and moved away. Kei came up behind him, putting his arms around him and whispering in his ear, “Remember what I told you.” With that, he gave him a little spank, eliciting a wince from his sore partner.

Riki’s eyes narrowed as he watched this. He knew well that look of pain, having spent many a day suffering from Iason’s merciless arm. Guy had been punished...of that much he was certain. And he was also certain...by whom.

Kei whispered something else in Guy’s ear, to which Guy responded by breaking away.

“That’s enough, Kei.”

“I’ll decide when it’s enough,” Kei replied.

“Back off.”

“Ohhh,” Kei laughed brokenly. “You’re in for it tonight.”

“I’m not coming over tonight. And what happened last night will *never* happen again.”

“We’ll see about that,” Kei threatened, grabbing his arm.

“Don’t touch me,” Guy hissed, yanking his arm away.

A little surprised, Kei stood for a moment, glowering. "Get your jacket. We're leaving. *Now*."

"No. I'm not going."

"Didn't I make myself clear last night?"

"Yeah. And I'm making myself clear now: we're over. Fuck off."

At this, Kei began to visibly shake, his face darkening. "Get your fucking ass outside, NOW."

Riki walked over to the couple, standing beside Guy with his arms crossed on his chest.

"He told you to fuck off. Which word didn't you understand?"

Kei turned to Riki, glaring menacingly. "I strongly advise you to STAY THE FUCK OUT OF THIS!"

"And I strongly advise *you* to go fuck yourself and your whore of a sister, too!"

With that, Kei rushed toward Riki, swinging. Riki dodged him, delivering a fearsome punch to Kei's stomach that knocked the wind out of him. Kei clutched his midsection, his mouth open in surprise. Riki gave him a second punch, this time to the face. Then he kicked him in the shins. Kei fell to his knees, still struggling to catch his breath. Before he could get up, Riki started in again, beating him to the floor and releasing all his frustration onto Kei's body as he pounded him with his closed fists.

Riki felt his arms restrained and realized that Noris and Sid were pulling him off Kei, who was now lying motionless on the floor. A crowd of onlookers had gathered, watching the unfolding drama.

"Let's split," Noris suggested. "Before the police get here."

The gang immediately dispersed. Guy leaned over and whispered in Riki's ear, "Come on."

Nodding, Riki followed him, the two of them quickly retrieving their helmets and then dashing outside. They got on their bikes and sped off into the night, making for Riki's hotel.

When they arrived, Riki took off his helmet and turned to Guy. "I'm sorry I beat up your unofficial boyfriend."

Guy shrugged. "He had it coming."

Riki laughed. "I have to say, I never thought I'd see *you* taking it."

"I took it from you, didn't I?"



“But that was...a mutual taking arrangement.”

“It was mutual with Kei too...up until recently.”

“How recently?”

“Just since you came along.”

“Let me guess. You got your ass whipped for visiting me last night, right?”

At this, Guy stared back at him, surprised.

“I’m right, aren’t I?”

Ashamed, Guy looked away. “You wouldn’t understand.”

“Don’t be so sure,” Riki replied softly.

Guy said nothing, his face darkening.

“Anyway...let’s go inside.”

Nodding, Guy fell in beside him as they entered the hotel. At the front desk the hotel manager made a slight bow to Riki. Guy shook his head at this. “Did you see that?” he whispered.

“What?” Riki asked, as they stepped into the elevator.

“The hotel manager *bowed* at you.”

“Yeah,” the mongrel laughed. “I’m special.”

“How are you special, Riki? What’s the big secret?”

“The secret is credits. All you need is credits and you get treated like royalty.”

Guy studied him for a moment. “Obviously, but how the hell did you get a credit portfolio?”

Riki sighed. “Look. I can’t tell you everything. Okay? It’s just the way it has to be.”

“Yeah, all right,” Guy said, finally, a smile creeping onto his face. “I’ll just have to use my secret weapon to lure it out of you.”

“Hmmm.” Riki smiled back, enjoying his flirting.

Encouraged by Riki’s relaxed manner, Guy moved forward, reaching out to rest his hand on the wall behind Riki and then leaning closer. Riki met his gaze steadily, deciding that, tonight, he was not going to resist Guy. After all, wasn’t that the whole reason he’d come back to Midas?

Sensing Riki’s receptive mood, Guy moved closer, leaning down to kiss him. It was a long, slow, gentle kiss that grew increasingly more passionate. Excited, Guy pressed his body up against him,

breaking away to kiss his neck. Riki closed his eyes, gasping.

“Riki,” Guy breathed. “I want you.”

The elevator door opened at the top floor, and Riki moved away, looking back over his shoulder in an inviting way.

Grinning, Guy followed him.

As soon as they were inside, Guy pushed him up against the door, running his hands up and down his body.

“Riki,” he moaned. “I need you. I want you so badly.”

Riki reached up and flicked off the lights that had automatically come on when they’d entered.

“Turn them back on,” Guy demanded.

“I prefer it dark.”

“Since when?” Guy flipped the switch back on. “I wanna see you.”

“Fuck you,” Riki laughed, turning them off again. “It’s happening in the dark or not at all.”

Guy gave a loud sigh of exasperation and then proceeded to rip Riki’s clothes off, tearing his new shirt in the process.

“Hey! That was expensive,” Riki complained.

“You can buy another one. You’re loaded.” Guy began kissing his bare chest, immediately gravitating to his left nipple and flicking it with his tongue.

“Oh shit,” Riki whispered, closing his eyes.

“That’s right. I haven’t forgotten.” Then Guy noticed the ring on Riki’s right nipple, and he reached for it. “What’s this?”

“Don’t touch it! It’s sore as hell. I just got it pierced today.”

“Yeah?” Guy felt extraordinarily pleased with this, believing that Riki had pierced it just for him. For years he had pleaded with him to do so, but the mongrel had always stubbornly refused.

Guy raked his hands down Riki’s body and fumbled with his pants zipper.

“Take these off. Let me suck you...you know you want me to.”

Biting his lip, Riki complied, his hands trembling as he unzipped and lowered his pants.

“Oh Riki,” Guy breathed. “You’re so ready for me, aren’t you?” The warmth of Guy’s hand on his cock sent shivers down Riki’s back. He was fully erect, twitching in his old partner’s hand.

Riki gently released Guy's hair from his ponytail, running his hands through his hair—hair that he had not touched for over two years. He had always loved Guy's long hair, though he could not help but notice that it was not nearly as soft as he remembered—or at least, not as silky-soft as Iason's. He closed his eyes and he let his head fall back against the door, gasping. Guy's mouth felt good, and he was incredibly aroused.

As he enjoyed the sensations coursing through his body, Riki found that his thoughts inexplicably drifted again to Iason. He could not help himself; he began fantasizing about the Blondie fucking him in various ways, dwelling for a while on the afternoon he had disciplined Iason over the bed. He also couldn't help but compare Guy's technique—although admittedly quite excellent—with Iason's. He found that he missed his Master's distinctive style: the way his tongue quivered rapidly against him and how he would look up at him, his sapphire-blue eyes smoldering with lust as he sucked him slowly, deliberately....

"Oh yeah," he groaned.

Encouraged, Guy gave his best performance, eliciting moans of appreciation from his old pairing partner.

Riki shifted his position, moving his hands to the side of Guy's head, a signal Guy remembered well. "I'm gonna come," he warned, preparing to pull Guy off him, as he knew his old lover did not care to swallow his sex.

Guy surprised him by grabbing onto his wrists to stay him.

Startled, Riki looked down. "Guy," he whispered urgently, but before he could say anything else he suddenly cried out, his whole body contracting as he ejaculated. Guy drank him completely, much to Riki's amazement and utter pleasure.

"Fuck yeah," he breathed, as he slowly recovered from the spasms of pleasure rushing through his body. "Shit. That was fucking awesome."

Smiling, Guy stood up.

"You...never used to...."

"Yeah, well." Guy wiped his mouth, giving him an arched look. "Some things have changed these two years."

Riki smiled at the irony of this remark, saying nothing.

“Now can I take you, Riki?”

“All right.”

Excited, Guy kissed him again. He reached into his pocket, pulling out a familiar vial and shaking it with a little smile.

“Hmmm. I guess you figured you’d be fucking me tonight?”

Guy laughed. “Actually, I always carry this. Take off these pants and go lie on the bed.”

Riki obeyed, lying back on the bed. Guy undressed quickly, his eyes shining.

“Let me turn on a light, Riki,” he pleaded. “I can barely see you.”

“No.”

Guy climbed onto the bed, lying on top of him. “Why not? What are you trying to hide?”

“I just...prefer it that way. It’s my prerogative.”

“Your...?” Guy laughed a little. “Whatever.” He began kissing Riki again. Then he poured oil into Riki’s hand and brought it to his erection. Riki could not help but be reminded of how Iason did almost the same thing, only a little slower, with a sort of gentle insistence he had grown to love.

Guy lifted his hips a little as Riki fondled him. Lubricating a finger, he inserted it, wiggling it a bit in the distinctive way the mongrel remembered well.

“That’s it,” Guy whispered, closing his eyes as Riki stroked him. “Yeah, Riki. That’s good. Just like that.”

Riki sighed, suddenly wishing that he was loving Iason. He could not help but wonder what his Blondie Master was doing...and then he began to imagine Iason with cat-boy.

Once again he felt annoyed with himself for suggesting that Iason take the Xeronian. He had no doubt that Iason would act on his offer; the Blondie required release every day, without fail, at least once and often several times. As he brooded over this, he unconsciously began pumping Guy a little harder.

“Whoa,” Guy whispered, reaching down to push Riki’s hand away with a little laugh. “That’s enough.” He moved himself up to Riki’s portal. “Spread your legs more...I can’t....”

Riki obeyed, opening himself up to his old lover, who slowly entered him, groaning.

“Oh yeah. Riki. You’re...you feel fucking amazing.”

Silent, Riki closed his eyes, once again noticing the difference between Guy and Iason. Guy was much smaller than Iason, and yet, despite Iason’s enormous girth, he found that he actually preferred the way the Blondie felt inside him.

He missed Iason. He missed his exotic, indescribable scent, his long, impossibly beautiful hair....

Guy was beside himself with pleasure. “God I’ve missed this. Riki...you’re *perfect*.”

Riki put his hands around Guy’s back, sliding them down to his ass, where he felt the unmistakable marks of discipline.

“Oh,” Guy gasped. “That hurts a bit.”

“I thought so. You were limping a little tonight.”

“I was?” Mortified, Guy slowed his thrusting.

“Don’t worry. I doubt anyone else noticed.”

Guy fell silent, and then it became clear to them both that he had lost his erection and had fallen out.

“Oh fuck,” he whispered.

“It’s all right,” Riki comforted.

Guy rolled over onto his back, covering his face with his arm. “Fuck. Fuck!”

Riki turned on his side, rising up on his elbow. “Hey. Don’t get all upset. It’s no big deal.”

“I didn’t want you to know about it.”

“Has he done it before?”

“No. Just last night.”

“That kind of thing happens all the time. You’d be surprised.”

“Right. Has it ever happened to you?” Guy demanded.

Riki smiled. If only Guy knew. “Yeah,” he said softly.

“You’re lying. You’re just saying that.”

“Honest. I’ve had my ass whipped plenty of times.”

Guy sighed, not really believing him but appreciating his attempt to make him feel better. “This wasn’t how I imagined it would be. Bloody fucking hell!”

“We were going good for a while there. And the night’s still young, so?”

Braving a look at him, Guy smiled. “Yeah. You’re still sweet as ever, Riki. Come here.” He held out his arms and Riki snuggled in, closing his eyes.

“I think I’ve missed this most of all,” Riki sighed.

“Yeah,” Guy agreed.

They lay together for a long time, both of them feeling so comfortable that they fell asleep.

Guy woke first, surprised that it was already morning. He turned to look at Riki, who was rolled over on his side, still asleep. He took advantage of the moment to examine Riki’s body, his eyes immediately gravitating to a strange mark on his lower back, just above his buttocks. He leaned closer, puzzled.

I.M.

Shaking his head, Guy wondered a little about this, but then was immediately distracted by Riki’s backside. Although the marks were faded, Guy could clearly see evidence that Riki had been recently punished. Stunned, Guy reached forward, touching his lover’s skin, as if unable to believe what he saw. Were those faded whip marks on his back?

Riki stirred, rolling onto his back and opening his eyes. Looking a little surprised to see Guy, he yawned. “Morning.”

“Sleep good?”

“Yeah.”

“Me too. But I could really use some coffee.”

Riki grinned. “Watch this.”

He pressed the coffee button by the bed, and immediately all manner of sounds began emanating from the kitchen—a humming, the sound of water running, some clicks, thuds, hisses and a few other unidentifiable noises, and then a pleasant gurgling. Finally the unmistakable aroma of brewing coffee began filling the air.

When the coffeobot finally came rolling into the room, Guy laughed loudly.

“What the fuck?”

“Wait! It’s bloody awesome!”

The coffeebot rolled up by the bed, its top sliding open to reveal a fresh pot of coffee and two mugs.

“Holy shit,” Guy laughed.

“Hey! There’s two mugs!” Riki exclaimed, excited. “How the hell did it figure that out?”

“How did you get all this, Riki?”

“This?”

Guy gestured to the hotel penthouse. “This. Everything. You’ve obviously made a fortune for yourself somehow.”

“That’s my little secret,” Riki answered.

Guy sighed. “You can’t even tell *me*?”

“Nope.” Riki winked, pouring himself some coffee.

“What does I.M. mean?”

At this, Riki froze.

“Yeah. I saw it. And I also saw the marks on your backside.”

Riki quickly recovered, putting on a relaxed face. “Yeah, well. I’ve gotten into the whole discipline scene.”

Guy narrowed his eyes but said nothing.

“My...partner, he likes that sort of thing,” Riki added.

“And who is your partner, Riki?”

“You wouldn’t know him.”

“You can’t at least tell me his name?”

“What, and let you go beat him up?”

Guy smiled. “What makes you think I care enough about you to do that?”

“You know you do,” Riki protested.

Guy laughed, punching him in the arm. “You little shit. So...what *does* I.M. mean?”

“If you must know, it stands for Iotung Master. I learned how to play Iotung and it turns out I’m just about the best there is.”

“Oh.” Guy shook his head. “And you were actually so proud of it that you had it tattooed on your ass?”

“I was a little drunk at the time.”

“I thought so,” Guy snorted.

Riki lit up, taking a deep drag. He offered Guy a smoke and for a while they sat in silence, smoking and drinking coffee.

“Riki. About last night,” Guy began.

“Forget about it. It doesn’t matter.”

“Maybe we can try again, later today?”

“Sure.”

“Kei’s going to be pissed as hell. He’ll probably come after you.”

Riki shrugged. “I can take him. So, are you breaking things off with him, then?”

“I don’t know. Usually he’s pretty cool. He just sorta flipped out when you showed up.”

“Don’t let me get in the way. I’m only going to be here for—” Riki suddenly stopped, catching himself.

“You’re only going to be here for...what?”

Riki shook his head, avoiding eye contact.

“When are you leaving, Riki?”

Sighing, Riki lifted his head and looked at Guy directly. “I’m going back in a few days.”

At this, Guy slammed his coffee cup down on the bedside table, sending the hot liquid flying everywhere. “What? A few fucking days? Why, Riki?”

“It just has to be that way.”

Frustrated, Guy put out his smoke and sat with his head in his hands. “Why won’t you talk to me?”

Riki remained silent, finishing his smoke. “I’m gonna shower,” he said softly, rising.

Guy grabbed his hand and Riki hesitated for a moment.

“You can trust me, Riki. Whatever it is you’re hiding from me, it doesn’t matter. I’ll always be here for you.”

Riki withdrew his hand gently and walked away without replying. He made for the shower, his heart pounding. He wanted to tell Guy everything, but he couldn’t. He knew that, for all Guy’s promises, he wouldn’t understand if he knew the truth.

He got into the shower, steam filling the room as he just stood, letting the water hit his body. He suddenly remembered a time when Iason had come into the shower with him. The mere thought of the beautiful Blondie aroused him immensely, quickly gifting him with a full erection.



As he fondled himself, he heard the door slide open and turned to see Guy standing there.

“Still masturbating in the shower, I see,” Guy remarked, moving toward him with a little smile.

Unable to reply, Riki only gasped when his old partner pushed him up against the tiled wall, taking hold of him and stroking him with experienced fingers.

“Now...let’s try this again,” Guy whispered, flipping Riki over to face the wall and using his knees to spread the mongrel’s legs. He pulled back on Riki’s hips and continued fondling him while he slowly penetrated.

“Oh,” Riki breathed.

“You’re about ready to burst. How does this feel?” Guy began thrusting a little harder, at the same time pumping him.

“Yeah. That’s good,” Riki gasped.

Guy groaned. “You feel so fucking good.”

“Oh! I’m gonna come.”

“Come, my love,” Guy whispered in his ear.

Riki found the appellation “my love” incredibly erotic, because it reminded him of something Iason would say. Guy had never used the phrase before and he found it surprising that he did so now.

But the mongrel didn’t have long to reflect on the matter—his ascent was upon him. With a long moan, he ejaculated, his essence dripping down Guy’s warm hand.

Guy continued to pump him a bit more and then released him slowly, sliding his hands to Riki’s hips as he increased the cadence of his fuck.

“God, I’ve missed this. You feel perfect. Stay just like this.”

Riki pressed his palms up against the tile, still recovering from his orgasm.

“Riki. God. Fuck, yes! Yeah...I’m coming!” Guy gasped as his whole body began shaking in the distinctive way Riki remembered well. Shuddering, Guy pulled out. “Bloody hell...that was brilliant.” He wrapped his arms around Riki, resting his head on his shoulder.

They stood together in the shower for some minutes, the water continuing to pelt down on them. Despite having just shared a

satisfying sexual moment with Guy, Riki felt strangely empty, as though he had lost part of himself when he had released his seed.

"I need another smoke," he said finally. "And some breakfast."

"Yeah. Me, too," Guy agreed. They finished showering and then went back to the bedroom after drying off.

Riki slipped on one of his new outfits—this time an expensive pair of riding pants with lots of pockets and straps, and a tight golden tank made of a strange imported fabric that seemed to glimmer slightly.

"You look nice," Guy remarked. "I look like shit compared to you." He pulled on his same clothes, looking a little ashamed.

"No, you don't," Riki argued. "You look good in anything."

"Hey. What's this?" Guy picked up the handheld visual phone that was lying on the carpet next to Riki's old clothes.

"It's nothing," Riki announced, alarmed. He held out his hand. "Give it to me."

Guy ignored him, finding the access button that flipped it open. "Whoa! It's...a visual projector personal phone, right? What's this here? Emergency—"

Riki snatched the phone from his hands, irritated. "Don't play with that. It's...expensive."

"You don't have to be an asshole about it. I was just curious."

"Sorry," Riki mumbled, shoving the phone into one of his pockets. "I just need some food. Let's order breakfast, okay?"

"Yeah, okay," Guy agreed, though he seemed a little put out.

"Are you pissed at me?"

"Not really. I just feel like...you're too good for me now or something. You have everything and I have nothing."

The mongrel didn't reply for a moment, concentrating on this selections from the menu. He punched in his order and then handed the menuboard to Guy. "You shouldn't feel like that. I'm not better than you. And it doesn't matter that you have nothing."

Guy stared at the menuboard, shaking his head. "I've never used one of these before."

"Just scroll through the images until you find what you want and punch the 'Add to Tray' button," Riki explained.

He had discovered the menuboard the previous day and had been delighted with the device, ordering far more food than he could eat just out of curiosity.

"This is what I'm talking about," Guy complained. "You're used to all this fancy...*Elite* stuff. If I didn't know better I'd think you *were* an Elite."

"I'm not an Elite," Riki answered quickly.

"Is your lover an Elite?"

"Let's not talk about this."

"Is that the big secret? You're with an Elite?" Guy pressed.

"I said I don't want to talk about it!"

Guy sighed, falling silent.

Riki lit up a smoke, handing one to Guy. "Let's not argue," he pleaded. "All right? Let's just have a good time."

Guy took the smoke. "I don't want to argue. I just wish you'd trust me."

"And I wish you'd trust *me*," Riki replied. "I'd tell you more if I could. Okay?"

"All right," Guy nodded. "I'll try to stop prying."

"Thanks." Riki offered him a small smile, just as the door chime announced the arrival of their breakfast. "That's our food. Let's eat!"



IASON STOOD ON THE WEST BALCONY, staring out at Tanagura. Night was falling and the lights of the city began to come on, one by one, just as the stars began to appear in the sky.

He was thinking of Riki, and his heart was heavy. All day he had been imagining his pet with someone else; for some reason, the image was quite specific—he saw Riki in the shower, a handsome youth with long dark hair taking him up against the shower wall. He tried to dispel the image from his thoughts but found that he couldn't. It was a scene that had replayed over and over in his mind since early that morning. Sighing, he once again berated himself for allowing his pet a week of freedom in Midas.

He was certain of one thing: he would never do so again.

“Iason.”

The Blondie turned to see Katze, who had come out to smoke and deliver a message to him.

“Omaki Ghan is here.”

Iason nodded, turning to go inside. “How is Daryl?”

“Good. He’s starting to complain about having to stay in bed.”

“That’s a good sign. Why don’t you bring him out here for a bit?”

Katze nodded. “He’d like that. Could we use the pools?”

“You may. Anytime, Katze.”

The Blondie quickly made his way back to the great hall, where Lord Ghan was waiting. Aki was standing before the dragon prow in the corner of the room.

“Don’t touch that, Aki,” Omaki warned.

“I’m not.”

“Omaki.” Iason nodded.

“Iason. I got your message. You spoke to Jupiter, then?”

“Yes.” He turned to Juthian, who was standing quietly by one of the arched doorways that lead to the kitchen. “Juthian, could you take Aki somewhere—up to the Observatory, perhaps?”

“I wanna feed the fish!” Aki yelled.

“Aki,” Omaki chided. “Quiet down.”

“Can I feed the fish?” he whispered.

“The fish have already been fed today,” Iason replied. “But you may go and see them.”

“But they might be hungry anyway!”

“No, Aki. That’s enough,” Omaki said, a little sternly.

“You’re mean,” Aki pouted.

Lord Ghan leaned down and seized his arm. “You want another spanking today, Aki, is that it?”

“No,” Aki replied, his eyes wide.

“Then behave and mind me.”

“Okay,” he answered, although he continued to sulk.

“Come with me, Aki.” Juthian smiled.

The boy took his hand and they left the great hall, heading down the guest wing to the pool and garden.

"Can I catch a butterfly?" Aki yelled, his voice echoing down the long corridor.

Any other day Omaki might have smiled, but this particular evening the sound of his wee voice, so full of life and innocence, filled him with sadness. He turned to Iason, rubbing a hand nervously against his thigh, as though somehow this would calm him. "So? What did Jupiter say?"

"Please, sit down," Iason said, moving towards the seating area by the fire. "What can I get you to drink?"

"No, no. Please. I don't need anything," Omaki answered, sitting down impatiently. "Please, don't keep me waiting. Is it bad news?"

"That depends on how you look at it," Iason replied, crossing his legs languidly.

"For the love of Erphanes, tell me!" Omaki cried.

"You have the option of appointing a Guardian. Jupiter is giving you one month to make arrangements for him."

At this, Lord Ghan fell silent, clearly disappointed.

"What did you expect?"

"I don't know. But I don't want to give him up. Perhaps I'll have that drink now—a scotch, if I may."

Iason turned to summon Tai and found him already moving to the bar. He had been standing just inside the kitchen where he could observe and listen without being noticed. "A scotch for Lord Ghan, Tai. I'll have a glass of Icarian Amber."

"Yes, Sir," Tai answered, bowing.

Iason turned back to Lord Ghan. "A Guardianship is better than nothing. Appoint a good friend—someone you trust who you can visit regularly."

"It's not the same."

"It's better than not seeing him at all for four years."

Omaki sighed. "The friend I trusted most is now a complete idiot."

"You mean Yousi? No...find someone else."

Lord Ghan regarded him for a moment. "Iason, would you—"

"No. Absolutely not."

"Please, Iason. Eos is safe. I'd feel so much better if you would keep him here with you."

“No, Omaki,” Iason replied, annoyed.

“But I know you like him. You like children. Everyone knows that. You built that entire Children’s Wing at Tanagura Medical.”

Iason made a face at this, turning away.

“You wouldn’t even have to do anything. Have Juthian take care of him.”

Iason closed his eyes, bringing a hand to his head as he felt another headache coming on.

“Iason. I’m begging you.”

“Let me...let me think about it,” he sighed.

Satisfied, Omaki relaxed, sitting back in his chair.

Tai brought a tray with their drinks and a plate of bite-sized cakes frosted with a delicate pink icing. Lord Ghan took one, chewing it thoughtfully. “My, these are good. So, what did Jupiter want to talk to *you* about?”

Iason took a sip of his wine before replying. “She’s allowing me to have Riki for another year. I’m to relocate the Xeronian, however.”

At this, Enyu, who had been listening to the conversation with interest, started. Iason wasn’t going to be his Master anymore? He moved, his chains drawing both Blondies’ attention.

“Does this mean you’re selling him?” Omaki asked, his eyes widening slightly.

“Are you interested?”

Lord Ghan smiled. “You could say that I am most *definitely* interested.” He turned to look at Enyu, who rewarded him with a seductive smile. “Oh my, yes. Iason. Name your price.”

“He was a gift. So you may have him also, as a gift.”

“Truly?” Omaki gazed at Enyu with open lust, adjusting himself when the Xeronian responded to his gaze by opening his robe and fondling himself.

“You’ll need to be careful with Aki, though,” Iason cautioned.

Omaki laughed. “I think he learned his lesson today. You’ll notice he didn’t even go near him.”

Iason smiled. “That was quite a spanking.”

“Oh yes...it was quite perfect. I rather...nearly stained my pants.”

The Blondie rolled his eyes, opting not to respond.

“How much longer is his interval?”

Enyu perked up, delighted that Lord Ghan used the proper terminology—interval, rather than *rut*.

“I believe he has two more days, although I’m not entirely sure how he’ll respond to the twin moons.”

“Ah. Then, perhaps I could take him home with me tonight?”

“Certainly. Let me gather his clothes—they’re Alphazenian, actually, though I haven’t yet had them fitted. Shall I send my tailor to you?”

Lord Ghan shook his head. “No, no. I’ll take care of all that. I’ll take what you have, but I’ll see to the rest of his wardrobe. I have a few things in mind, already,” he added, eyeing Enyu, who gazed back provocatively. “Oh my,” he breathed, adjusting himself again. “Iason, I may have to trouble you for...a cloth of some kind.”

“Go ahead and take him now, if you want.”

“Now? I couldn’t, honestly,” Omaki answered, immediately walking toward Enyu. “However, if you insist.”

Enyu looked up at him hopefully.

“Hello, my Enyu,” he whispered in Xeronian.

Enyu was so surprised, at first he couldn’t answer. “You speak my tongue?” he asked finally.

“Not well, mind you. Just the basics—the critically important things.” The Blondie gave him a meaningful look, unzipping his trousers to reveal a massive erection. “Would you be so kind as to suck me off?”

Enyu immediately got on his knees to oblige him, flicking his tongue eagerly over the head of his cock to lap up his essence.

“Nicely done,” Omaki praised, grabbing hold of his head. “But let’s speed things up a bit. I’m about to lose my seed. This is going to be just a quickie, mind you.”

The Xeronian opened wide and Lord Ghan plunged inside, his eyes rolling back.

“Ah yes. Absolutely delightful. Now prepare yourself for a special package here...which should be arriving...uhhn...right about *now*.”

With that, the Blondie ejaculated, thrilled when Enyu swallowed every drop.

“Oh...you’re a perfect little thing, aren’t you? You’re coming home with me tonight. What do you think about that?”

“Are you my new Master?” Enyu asked, excited.

“Mmm, yes. But touch Aki and I’ll have to break your legs.”

Enyu shook his head. “I’ll try not to. But during my interval, I can’t...help myself.”

Omaki nodded, zipping his pants. “I’ll keep you chained up then.” He watched Enyu for a moment, feeling compassion for the Xeronian who pumped himself so pathetically. Crouching down, he reached out and took hold of his erection, smiling. “Let me help you out with that.”

“Ohh!” Enyu cried. “You’re a good Master!”

“You and I are going to get along quite well,” the Blondie replied.

With just a few quick strokes, he brought the lusty Xeronian to orgasm, astonished by the copious amount of semen that shot across the floor.

“My, my,” he commented.

Enyu was in the throes of his coital bliss, his head thrown back and his eyes closed.

“You’re a lovely pet, aren’t you?” Omaki whispered. “I’m going to take good care of you.”

Gasping, Enyu looked at his new Master, his eyes dilating and constricting. “I’ll be good to you, Master. I’ll do whatever you say.”

“Dear me. You’re after my heart as well,” Lord Ghan replied, standing up. He turned to Iason, who had watched the whole scene with unveiled delight.

“That was quite a performance,” the Blondie teased.

“You pervert,” Omaki accused.

“I’m feeling rather pleased with this arrangement,” Iason replied. “Although a part of me will be sorry to see him go.”

“You can come and visit him whenever you like,” Omaki offered.

Iason nodded to Enyu. “Omaki will be your Master now. You were a good little pet, Enyu. I am sorry that I did not take better care of you.”

“You took good care of me, Master,” Enyu protested. “But I am happy to go with Master Omaki.”



“You’ll consider my request, then?” Lord Ghan pressed, turning back to Iason.

“I’ll consider it. No promises, Omaki.”

Omaki nodded. “Very well. Then, let me retrieve my Aki, and we’ll be off.”



AKI WAS IN A STATE OF RAPTURE from the moment he learned that the “naked man” was coming home with them. He spent the entire trip straining to look behind him in order to see what Enyu was up to in the back seat, feeling compelled to report his every action.

“He’s touching his private parts again,” he announced.

“Yes, Aki. I heard you the first time.”

“But why is he doing that?”

“Because, it makes him feel good.”

Aki pondered this for a moment, reaching down to touch himself.

Omaki smiled at this, and then took his hand and directed it back to his side. “That’s not appropriate for little boys, Aki.”

“How come?” Aki demanded.

“Because I said so. That’s something private.”

“Then can I touch myself in private?”

“Yes, you may do so in private.”

Aki narrowed his eyes. “Then how come *you* get to touch yourself and *he* gets to be naked and touch himself?”

“Because we are grown men, not little boys.”

The boy reflected on this for a moment. Enyu, who had been vigorously masturbating in the back seat, at that moment ejaculated, groaning loudly as semen squirted up and then ran down his hand.

Aki screamed.

“Goodness,” Omaki gasped, startled.

“He broke it!”

Lord Ghan tried hard not to laugh but found that he could not suppress a smile.

"It is not broken, Aki. That is how grownups relieve themselves."

"But he said he didn't have to use the bathroom."

"I'm not talking about that. I'm talking about something else that you're too young to understand."

Aki regarded Enyu with a mixture of horror and awe. "What's all that...stuff on his hand?"

"A special present," Enyu replied. "Do you want to lick my hand?"

"Enyu," Omaki scolded, sharply.

"Can I lick his hand?" Aki pleaded.

"Absolutely not."

"I am sorry, Master," Enyu murmured, bowing his head.

"It is all right, Enyu. But you are not to solicit Aki's sex again. Is that understood?"

"Yes, Master."

"What does *slisit my sax* mean?"

"Never mind, Aki."

"Hmm," Aki pouted.

Once they were home Omaki chained Enyu firmly to the hall post. Aki was unable to contain his excitement over Enyu's arrival and continued to run around in a wide circle until finally Lord Ghan grabbed him and sat him down firmly in a chair.

"Settle down," he ordered.

"I can't," Aki whimpered.

"I suggest you try, Aki, or I'll turn you over my knee and give you another spanking. That will force you to settle down, I think."

Aki quieted at this, watching Enyu get comfortable in a chair that Omaki pushed within reach of his chain. The Xeronian was thrilled to be treated as something more than an animal and began to purr, a strangely erotic sound that fascinated his new Master.

"Oh my," he whispered. "I like that." He leaned forward to whisper in Enyu's ear. "You and I will get to know one another more intimately later tonight, after Aki has gone to bed."

Enyu smiled, blinking his elliptically-dilated eyes hypnotically. Omaki could not resist putting a hand in his soft, reddish-brown hair. "You're a good little pet, Enyu."

"What did you whisper in his ear?" Aki asked loudly.

“That is my own business,” Omaki replied. Then he pointed to a holographic line he had erected with an X3000 Holotape dispenser. The line projected up about a hand’s width from the floor, marking the perimeter of Enyu’s reach. “Aki. You are NOT to cross this line, ever. Is that understood?”

“Yeah.” Aki looked away, uninterested.

Omaki walked over to him and crouched down before him. “Aki, listen to me. If you do not mind me, I will spank you twice as hard and three times as long as I did earlier today. Your bottom will hurt so horribly you won’t be able to sit. Is that perfectly clear?”

Eyes wide, Aki nodded.

“Good boy. Now, go and get ready for bed.”

“But I’m not sleepy!”

“That makes no difference. Mind me, Aki.”

Trudging off to his room as though he were being sent into combat unarmed, Aki muttered to himself about the injustice of being eight years old. Lord Ghan started to pet Enyu but was redirected to his terminal when a call came in from Heiku.

“I’m sorry to disturb you so late,” Heiku began.

“Not a problem.”

“Are you well?”

“Yes, of course. How are things over at Tanagura Medical?”

“Quite interesting, actually. In fact, that’s what I wanted to talk to you about.”

“Oh? Sounds promising. Dare I hope you’ve come into a bit of juicy gossip?”

Heiku laughed. “Yes, I confess I’m anxious for an audience. Who do you suppose came to me today?”

“I couldn’t possibly guess.”

“Raoul Am.”

“Raoul?” Omaki puzzled over this and then laughed. “Let me guess. He wanted you to remove a branding mark?”

“A...branding mark? No,” Heiku answered, smiling. “Though now you’ve piqued my curiosity on that count.”

“Oh, I can’t tell you about that. No indeed. You’ll have to wait until I can show you the footage. It’s quite...remarkable.”

"Sounds delightful. But no, it wasn't to remove a branding mark, although it's interesting you should mention that. Very interesting, indeed. In fact—well, I'll save that for another time."

"What are you muttering about?"

"Oh! Nothing. Regarding Raoul's visit—do you give up?"

"I'm afraid so."

Heiku leaned forward. "He wants to have his attendant go through reconstruction."

Lord Ghan fell silent for a moment. "Is this an Independent channel, Heiku?"

"Yes, it is."

"Are you certain?"

"Yes. As long as they are available, I always use Independent."

Omaki relaxed. "Then...you're saying?"

"I don't know for certain, but my guess is that Raoul is taking the youth—his name is Yui, I believe."

"Is that so?" Omaki shook his head. "I would not have expected that from Raoul."

Heiku smiled. "Why not? Everyone knows he and Iason paired for years."

"Still, to take his own attendant? I find it surprising."

"Oh, I find it shocking," Heiku agreed. "Especially that he has the balls to defy Jupiter and undo a sanctioned modification."

"Yes, well...my opinion of Raoul just went up a few notches."

"Mine as well."

"So, are you going to do it? The procedure?"

"I'm considering it."

"You realize what the punishment is if you're caught?"

Heiku nodded grimly. "Confiscation of all my assets and a mandatory public whipping."

"And you're willing to risk that?"

"In the name of freedom, yes."

"I take it you've never actually *been* to a public whipping," Omaki remarked, wryly.

Lord Quiahtenon laughed. "Omi. You're incorrigible."

"Yes, well. Ah! Guess what Iason gave me today?"

"I don't know. A sexual disease?"

"Funny. But no. He gave me a Xeronian pet."

"Does he have any others?" Heiku asked, interested.

"Not for *you*."

"What does that mean?"

"It means it would be a total waste to give you a Xeronian. Everyone knows you never touch your pets."

"You act as though there's something wrong with that."

"I'm not saying there's anything wrong with it. I'm just saying I find it a bit odd that *you*, in particular, are so orthodox when it comes to your pets."

"Why would you call me orthodox? Ima was the first pet I've acquired since...well, since Yousi was modified. Surely that, at least, should be considered *unorthodox*."

"That's true," Lord Ghan conceded.

There was a slight pause in the conversation. Omaki felt his heart go out to Heiku when he saw the look of sadness in his eyes. Even after five years, Heiku still hadn't gotten over Yousi's modification. Omaki knew how he felt—although he also knew it wasn't quite the same. Yousi had been Omaki's best friend. But Heiku and Yousi had been lovers.

"How is that new pet working out for you? Ima, isn't it?" he asked, smiling.

"Hmm? Ah, yes. She's...well, I confess she's not exactly what I expected. She doesn't...engage me intellectually."

"What on earth do you mean? What did you expect? She's a pet, not a philosopher!"

"I realize that, but I was under the impression she had academic aspirations. Xian told me she had made a contribution to an esteemed periodical."

"Heiku," Omaki laughed, "Xian was talking about the illegal pet magazine she posed in. Don't tell me you didn't know about that?"

"What?"

At that moment, Omaki turned and saw that Aki was about to step past the holographic line into Enyu's domain. "My apologies—I must go, Heiku," he said, abruptly cutting off the transmission.

The boy's foot was just past the line, and Enyu was ready to pounce, his eyes dilated and his mouth curled into a sinister smile.

"Aki!" he yelled.

Aki started, pulling his foot back.

"What did I tell you, Aki?" he scolded.

"But he—"

"What did I *just* tell you? Didn't I make it perfectly clear to you what would happen if you disobeyed me?"

Aki began to cry.

"Come here!"

The boy remained frozen, utterly terrified. Omaki took a few steps forward and lifted him up, carrying him over to his chair. He sat down and pulled him over his knees, tugging down his pajama bottoms angrily.

"You're going to be punished, Aki. I warned you, but you didn't listen, did you? Why did you disobey me? Two spankings in the same day. What a naughty boy!"

Aki clutched onto Omaki's pants, already wailing. Lord Ghan doled out his punishment, reprimanding him all the while. At length he brought matters to a close, partially out of pity for the boy who cried so pathetically, and partly because spanking Aki had given him an onerous erection.

He set the boy roughly on his feet. "Now go to your room until I call you," he ordered, giving his bare bottom one final pat.

Aki ran to his room, holding his punished bottom and sobbing as he ran, his pajamas still around his ankles and trailing behind him.

Omaki immediately fumbled with his trousers but found that his zipper was stuck. He cursed, his hands shaking. He was so aroused he was ready to burst.

"Can I help you, Master?" Enyu asked, having watched the entire spanking with delight and fondling himself as he watched. He could sense his Master's arousal and this excited him even more.

"Too late," Lord Ghan gasped, finally freeing his erection. With a loud groan he pumped himself, the semen oozing down his hand with delicious release. He let his head fall back against the chair, closing his eyes.

“Master likes spanking Aki,” Enyu noted.

Omaki opened one eye, looking over at Enyu with a saucy grin tugging at his lips. “You’re quite perceptive,” he teased. “I wonder...what gave you that idea.”

“I liked watching you.”

“Ohhh,” the Blondie laughed brokenly. “I adore you already.”

“Are we still going to ‘get to know one another intimately’ tonight?” Enyu asked hopefully.

Omaki smiled. “Is that how I put it? Why yes. If you mean, am I going to fuck you hard, little pet, the answer is yes.” He gestured to his pelvis. “Don’t let this concern you. I’m good for at least three times a day.”

Excited, Enyu got up, moving as far as his chain would allow.

“Settle down now. Not yet. I have...a little matter to attend to.”

With that, Lord Ghan cleaned up. He could hear Aki continue to sob and his heart softened a little.

“Aki,” he called, finally.

The sobbing ceased and a dead silence followed.

“Come here.”

After a long moment, Aki’s peeped at him from around the hallway corner, his eyes wide and his cheeks tear-stained. He was sucking his thumb.

“Come now. You’re far too old to be sucking your thumb, Aki.”

Aki removed his thumb with obvious reluctance.

“Come here,” Omaki repeated, patting his lap reassuringly.

The boy relaxed, slowly walking towards him until he reached his chair. Then he climbed up onto his lap. Lord Ghan put his arms around him, giving him a hug. With a big sigh, Aki leaned his head against his Master’s chest, snuggling up to him.

Omaki began stroking his hair. “You know that I punish you for good reasons, Aki. I am trying to keep you safe. Sometimes you don’t understand why I tell you not to do something. You will have to learn to trust me and obey me, for your own good.”

“My bottom hurts,” Aki whimpered, wiggling and trying to reposition himself in a manner that caused less pressure on his sensitive nether regions.

"Yes, I imagine it does, because you've just been spanked soundly twice in the same day. If you are good and mind me, you won't have that problem. Isn't that right?"

Aki sighed again.

"Now, are you going to go near Enyu, Aki?"

"No."

"Why did you go near him this time, after I had just instructed you not to?"

"Because he said he had a special present for me and that you said I could."

"You must never listen to what he tells you, because what he is trying to do is get you to disobey me so he can...grab you," Omaki explained, giving Enyu a warning look. Enyu hunched down a bit. "He will try to trick you, so obey me, Aki."

"Okay."

"Good boy." Lord Ghan stroked his hair reassuringly, kissing the top of his head.

"I love you, Master," Aki whispered, yawning.

His heart stopping, Omaki could not reply for a moment. It was the first time Aki had ever expressed such a sentiment.

"I love you too, Aki," he said softly, finally. "You're a sweet little boy. Someday, when you're older, you're going to be my pet."

Aki made a little noise, and Omaki looked down to see that he had closed his eyes. Smiling, he held the boy a while longer until it was clear he had fallen asleep. Then he gently carried him to his room and tucked him into bed.

He returned to the hall and stood before Enyu, one hand on his hip. "It seems you're in for some punishment, naughty pet."

Enyu backed away, looking frightened and dismayed. Omaki took hold of his neck chain, pulling him closer. "I shall have to fuck you repeatedly until I feel your punishment is sufficient."

At this, Enyu relaxed, a broad smile lighting up his face. "Yes, Master. I must be punished. Punish me hard."

"Oh, I shall. But, in all seriousness, Enyu, you *must* rein in your desires when it comes to Aki."

"I cannot help it," Enyu pleaded miserably.



Omaki studied him for a moment. "Yes, I believe that. Poor thing. Well, then I fear my Aki is going to have a perpetually sore little bottom, unless I can teach him to mind me."

"When my interval is past, I will behave, I promise."

"Are you still easily aroused when you are not in your interval?"

"Oh yes," Enyu replied, excited. "The only difference is that I can control myself."

"Excellent. Because you see, I have rather, shall we say, *significant* daily needs."

"Yes, Master," Enyu smiled happily. "I will take care of you."

"I mean at least three times a day, perhaps five. Or six."

Enyu's eyes dilated at this and he immediately reached for his erection, fondling himself. "Oh, Master," he breathed. "I will do whatever you wish."

"Good boy. Now, my Enyu, it's time for a good fucking." With that, he released the pet's chain from the hall post and led him into the Master bedroom, where he had Enyu disrobe.

"Let me take a look at you. Turn around."

Enyu obeyed, and Lord Ghan winced upon seeing the dark bruises on his buttocks and thighs, vestiges of his earlier taming. "Oh my. Iason is brutal with that taming stick, isn't he?"

The Xeronian whimpered a little but made no reply, afraid to say anything against his former Master.

"Even so...my, you are lovely. Spread your legs and bend over with your hands on the bed."

The Xeronian did as instructed, offering himself for Omaki's viewing pleasure. The Blondie unfastened his trousers and began coddling his new erection. "Arch your back," he whispered, drawing his breath in sharply when Enyu obeyed. "Oh my. Yes."

"Master," Enyu whispered, excited. "I want to be fucked. May I be fucked, please?"

These words sent blood rushing to the Blondie's loins, and he quickly undressed to honor his pet's request. The Xeronian looked back at him, eyes widening at the handsome Blondie's impressive physique. Lord Ghan was more alluring than he had expected, his abdomen ripped tight and his long limbs beautifully sculpted.

“Master...I love your body,” he announced.

“And I love yours,” Omaki replied, positioning himself behind his new pet, his eyes now dark and smoldering with lust. He rested his hands on Enyu’s hips, teasing him for a few minutes by pressing his massive erection up to his portal without actually penetrating.

Enyu began panting, arching back against him in an attempt to force penetration. “Fuck me. Please. Fuck me, Master.”

Grinning at his pet’s solicitation, the Blondie slowly lubricated himself with one of his many vials of sex oil. He was enjoying Enyu’s begging but finally granted his wish, sinking his immense organ into the Xeronian’s astonishingly tight depths.

“Oh...pet,” he groaned, his eyes rolling back.

Enyu cried out loudly but was so aroused that within just a few minutes his cries changed to whimpers of pleasure. Xeronian physiology offered unique benefits. Penetration, although initially painful, triggered the release of opiates from thousands of receptors lining the rectum, especially during the 5-day interval. He bucked back against his Master, inviting deeper intimacy, and Lord Ghan responded by undertaking further exploration.

“You’re so tight,” Omaki said, his voice low and raspy with sex.

“Mmnn,” Enyu groaned, pumping himself as he felt his ascent suddenly approach. “Oh Master...sooo good!”

“Come for me, my pet,” the Blondie commanded, ramming him a little harder.

Enyu obeyed, his semen shooting across the bed in glorious arcs. His cries stimulated Omaki’s ascent, and the Blondie dug his nails into the Xeronian’s hips as he consummated their coital congress.

“Jupiter help me,” he gasped, feeling a bit overcome from the experience. He withdrew slowly, groaning as a few truant spasms of pleasure titillated him. “Oh, Enyu...you are...a complete delight.”

Enyu was shaking, having enjoyed such an immensely satisfying orgasm that he was rendered momentarily speechless.

“Was it...not pleasurable for you?” Omaki asked, concerned when his pet did not reply.

“Oh, Master. That was...my best sexual experience ever,” Enyu answered honestly.

Smiling, Lord Ghan turned him around and then bent down, gifting him with a gentle kiss. He explored him a little with his tongue, and then pulled away, shivering.

“Oh my. We’ll have to try this again later,” he whispered. “I like kissing you.”

“I like to be kissed,” Enyu replied, feeling rather swept off his feet by his new, incredibly erotic Master.

“So. Perhaps now we should take care of your other needs. We’ll get you some dinner and then you can take a nice long bath.”

“Thank you, Master,” Enyu said, delighted to be so pampered. At that moment, he felt the happiest he had ever felt in his life.

## A Simple Misunderstanding

IASON SPENT EVERY NIGHT that week in Riki's room, where he sat, thinking about his pet. Sometimes he ran the holographic projector, but mostly he only needed his own thoughts to fuel his fantasies.

The night before Riki was due to come home, the Blondie was particularly aroused. He couldn't wait to have him in his arms again. As much as he had enjoyed Enyu, the Xeronian only gave him a fraction of the pleasure Riki did. Iason knew this was because he had no real feelings for Enyu. The pet had been eager and obedient, but the pleasure had been fleeting.

Ever since Enyu had left the penthouse, Iason felt relieved of the enormous attraction he had felt toward the creature. His elevated pheromones had been oppressive, making the Blondie feel uncomfortably stimulated and never completely satisfied. Now that he was gone, Iason focused all his thoughts on Riki.

He sat in one of the chairs and unfastened his trousers, spreading his legs a bit as he began stroking himself. Just the mere thought of Riki gave him an erection; to actively fantasize about him guaranteed consummation. He imagined his pet lying on the bed, his legs spread apart invitingly as Iason approached. The Blondie mentally positioned his pet in a variety of poses, taking him without restraint. In his fantasies, he was prone to be a bit more violent, somehow finding such forceful acquisition particularly erotic.

Then he thought about spanking Riki. This he found exceedingly arousing, so much so that within minutes he began a precipitous ascent, hurling himself toward a glorious finish as his semen pumped up in hypnotic bursts and dripped slowly down his hand.

For a long moment the Blondie remained in the chair, relishing the thought of having his pet back in his arms again. He tried not to dwell on the jealousy that had been eating away at him all week, but he could not help himself. Iason tormented himself with images of Riki pairing with Guy, wondering if they had actually engaged in sexual congress, and if so, how many times.

He had been particularly disappointed that his pet hadn't called him, not even once. Had Riki missed him at all? The Blondie had carried his handheld with him everywhere, hoping the mongrel would find some reason to contact him. More than once Iason had started to place an outgoing beacon but had always aborted the call at the last moment. He wanted *Riki* to call *him*, on his own. More than this, he feared he would discover his pet with someone, and he couldn't bear to confront that reality.

"Riki," the Blondie sighed, closing his eyes. *I want you home.*



RIKI PRESSED THE COFFEE BUTTON again, curious to see what the coffeobot would do if he blocked its path. The little bot, after brewing up a pot of coffee, rolled toward the bedroom. Riki stepped in front of it, blocking its access. The bot hesitated, turning around in a small circle. Then it attempted to go around him but was thwarted from its mission by Riki's foot.

"Quit teasing that thing," Guy laughed, from the bed.

"Why? It's fun."

"You'll screw up its programming. It'll explode or something."

Riki grinned. "That would be awesome."

"I kinda feel sorry for it, what with assholes like you tormenting it all day."

Now Riki shook his fist. "Say that to my face, ya wise ass."

"Come over here and I will," Guy taunted, smiling.

Riki approached him, and Guy reached out and grabbed him, throwing him over his knee and spanking him.

"Oh! Fucking cut it out!" Riki laughed.

“No. You must be punished!”

“You suck as a disciplinarian. That doesn’t even hurt.”

“Oh?” Taking this as a challenge, Guy tugged down his pants, spanking him quite a bit harder.

“Fuck! Okay! Ow, fuck! Yeah, I was just—*kidding*! Stop!”

“No! You’re going to pay for those remarks, *Sir Riki*!”

Riki was laughing at the same time he was crying out, which resulted in a bad case of the hiccups.

Guy shook his head. “You’re really something.”

Riki didn’t reply, holding his breath in an attempt to remedy his little problem.

Guy began rubbing his ass, which was a little red from the spanking. “Mmmm. Now this is giving me ideas.”

The mongrel expelled his breath. “Don’t even think about it,” he announced. “You already fucked me enough times, you little prick. Give me a break.”

“Hmmm. I guess this means you need...ANOTHER SPANKING!” With that, Guy spanked him again, this time so hard that Riki was no longer amused.

“Dammit, Guy! Fucking cut it out!”

“No. This is for taking off for over two years without ever calling me or anything.” Increasing the intensity of his strikes, Guy pinned Riki down, releasing all his pent-up anger on the mongrel’s bare ass.

“Guy! Please stop!” Riki struggled futilely to escape his punishment, feeling keenly the injustice of being spanked during his week away from Iason.

“Do you have any fucking clue what I went through?” Guy demanded, continuing his brutal discipline.

“Shit,” Riki whimpered, his eyes stinging with tears.

“I waited by the phone for months,” Guy hissed.

At that moment the coffeobot arrived by the bed, its lid sliding open to reveal a fresh pot of coffee and two mugs. Momentarily distracted, Guy lost his hold on Riki, who immediately broke free.

“You fucking asshole!” Riki yelled, taking a swing at him.

Guy ducked, but too late; Riki’s fist met with his cheek in a stunning blow that left him reeling. The mongrel continued to swing

at him, and Guy tried to defend himself, grabbing onto his wrists and finally managing to flip Riki onto his back, pinning him down to the bed.

"All right, Riki. Let's call it even," he gasped. He could taste blood in his mouth and now knew firsthand why Riki had been so renown for his fighting abilities.

Riki slowly began to calm down. "Yeah, okay," he said, finally.

Guy released him. "Shit. It wasn't like I was even spanking you that hard."

"It felt plenty hard to me," Riki snapped back, pulling his pants back up and zipping them grumpily.

"And you said I wasn't a disciplinarian," Guy taunted.

"Shut up, ya fucking bastard." Riki lit up a smoke, and then poured himself some coffee.

"Give me one of those," Guy demanded.

Riki tossed him a smoke, sulking.

"Oh, come on. Let's not ruin things."

"Did it ever occur to you that maybe I wasn't *able* to contact you?" Riki replied, darkly.

"What do you mean?"

Riki looked away, sighing. "Nothing. Forget it."

"Look, Riki. It would help if you'd open up to me and tell me where you've been. What's the big secret? Tell me. Whatever it is, you can trust me."

The mongrel poured himself some coffee, saying nothing.

Guy sighed loudly and then shrugged. "Whatever. Fine. Be all mysterious." He suddenly frowned, spying something on the floor near the bed.

"Hey. What's this?"

He picked up a pretty hair barrette, turning it over in his hands. "This is something a girl would wear." He looked up at Riki, smiling slyly. "What have you been up to, you little devil?"

Riki shrugged, smiling slightly.

"What, did you hire a brothel pet?"

The mongrel snorted at this. "Like I have to pay to get sex. Give me that," he demanded, holding out his hand.

Guy held the barrette at arm's length, laughing. "Not until I get some details. Come on. I'd tell *you*."

"Yes, it was a pet. But no, I didn't hire her. She was a hot little number I've had my eye on for a while." Riki snapped his fingers impatiently. "Give it here."

Guy laughed again, tossing him the barrette. "You'd better watch yourself. If her Master finds out, you'll be in deep shit. I've heard those Elites can be complete dickheads when it comes to their pets. They're very possessive."

Riki knew only too well the truth in that, but he made no reply. He shoved the barrette into his pocket, realizing that Ima had never come back like she'd promised.

"I need to get out of here. Let's...go somewhere."

"We can probably go back to Depravities now. It's been five days. No one will care."

"Yeah." Riki contemplated telling Guy that he only had until sundown before he had to return to Eos but decided that he would just disappear when it was time.

"Although, Kei's probably camped there, waiting for us," Guy pointed out.

"Fuck Kei. I'm not scared of that little weasel."

"Good. Then let's go."

Riki started to get up, but Guy grabbed his wrist. "Hey. Give me a kiss first."

The mongrel bent down and kissed him, wondering if it would be their last kiss. Strangely, he found that he did not even really care. He missed Iason terribly. Sex with Guy had been perfectly decent, but...it just wasn't the same. In every regard, Guy just couldn't measure up to Iason.



WHEN RIKI AND GUY ARRIVED at Depravities, they found the rest of the gang, minus Kei, already there and so joined them at their table. Guy put his arm around Riki as they sat down.



"Where have you two been hiding?" Noris teased.

"We weren't hiding," Riki protested.

Guy smiled. "Yeah. We were...busy."

The others smiled knowingly at this, glad to see the old lovers together again.

"It's just like the old gang again," Sid proclaimed, voicing what everyone was feeling.

Then Guy grew serious. "Has Kei been around?"

Luke nodded. "He comes by every day, looking for both of you."

"You really fucked him up, Riki," Noris said. "You should have seen his face the next day."

"You came back here the very next day?" Guy laughed.

Noris shrugged. "No one cared. We just walked right in like nothing had happened. I doubt they even called the police."

At that moment the attendant arrived at the table, bowing to Riki. "Welcome back, Sir Riki. What can I get you tonight?"

"A round of whatever they want."

"Brandy!" Sid and Noris both shouted.

Luke crossed his legs. "I'll have a cognac."

The others snorted at this, finding it amusing.

"Oh! Sir Luke is having *cognac*," Noris announced in a lofty, elegant voice.

"I'll have a brandy, too," Riki said. "What about you, Guy?"

"Brandy." Guy smiled.

"How about some more smokes, Riki?" Sid pleaded.

"And...five packs of Dark Baccalias."

"Woo hoo!" Sid cheered.

"Very good, Sir. I'll be back directly."

"Thank Jupiter you're back, Sir Riki," Noris remarked. "We haven't been able to get any fucking service."

"You missed it," Sid said. "There was a Blondie here earlier. He had a gorgeous little pet—a Xeronian!"

Riki felt the blood drain from his face. Had Iason come looking for him?

"Yeah, apparently he owns Depravities," Noris added. "He kept looking over here at our table."

Now Riki began to feel angry. Was it possible that Iason owned Depravities and had been watching him this whole time? And had he come here with Enyu to retrieve him?

“Hey. Riki. What’s up?” Guy whispered.

Riki shook his head. “Nothing.”

In fact, he was furious that Iason had not trusted him. Or worse, that he had been *spying* on him. Riki decided to punish Iason. He would not go back as he had promised. That would be his way of showing the Blondie that he still had a will of his own.



RAOUL WAS SITTING ON THE DIVAN, reading the Tanagura Art Quarterly and drinking some coffee when he became aware of a small presence at his feet. He peered down at the small golden kitten, which sat patiently, looking up at him.

The kitten mewed.

“What do you want?” Raoul asked suspiciously.

As if to answer him, the kitten suddenly leapt up onto his lap, sinking his claws into the Blondie’s thighs.

Lord Am cried out, spilling his coffee.

Yui came running from the kitchen where he had been cleaning up after dinner and, on apprehending his Master trying to disengage the kitten from his pants, could not help laughing.

“You find this funny?” Raoul growled. “He *ruined* my trousers.”

Yui quickly changed his demeanor, trying to fight off a bad case of the giggles. “Yes, Master. He is a very naughty kitty.”

Finally managing to free his garment from the kitten’s sharp claws, Lord Am held the fluffy creature out in front of him, perplexed. “He’s vibrating,” he announced.

Unable to help himself, Yui giggled. “It just means he likes you.”

“Well, take him away. I spilt coffee on myself because of him.”

“Yes, Master.” Yui retrieved the kitten, shaking a finger at him. “Naughty kitty!” he scolded.

The kitten answered that by playfully batting at his finger.

“Yui,” Raoul said sharply, as the youth began to walk away. “Did I dismiss you?”

Yui stopped. “I’m sorry, Master. Did you want something?”

“You are responsible for making sure that animal doesn’t cause any trouble. And I think,” he gestured to his pants, “we can safely say he’s caused a bit of trouble here. So the question is...how are you to be punished?” A smile crept on his face, his eyes gleaming.

Realizing that his Master was playing, Yui smiled back. “You shall decide that, Master.”

“Well said. I believe that I promised you a spanking, should you fail to control his mischief. Put him down and come here.”

Obeying, Yui set the kitten down, who immediately darted off in pursuit of some imaginary foe.

When Yui approached him, Lord Am seized him and pulled him over his knees, tugging his pants down to his thighs. “I find that you have failed in your duties as a kitten-keeper, Yui. Therefore you must be soundly punished.”

With that, Raoul commenced with a thorough spanking, much to the surprise of Yui, who had not expected anything more than a few playful smacks.

Not wanting his Master to know how much it hurt, he fought to remain silent. Raoul, mistaking Yui’s silence for a lack of pain, increased the intensity of his strikes.

Yui’s bottom made a transformation, growing increasingly crimson as the spanking continued, and Raoul, being a deviant with a penchant for discipline, found this sexually arousing. Frustrated that Yui did not cry out, he began a fresh campaign, spanking him so hard that at length the boy couldn’t hold back.

The agony in his cries immediately stayed the Blondie, who set him back on his feet. Yui’s face was distorted with emotion, tears streaming down his face.

Confused, Raoul shook his head. “I thought you...why didn’t you cry out?” he demanded.

“I didn’t want to displease you. I thought you were only playing a game,” Yui replied, his voice quivering. “And I didn’t want you to know how much it hurt.”

“Yui,” Lord Am sighed, exasperated.

He pulled the youth onto his lap, holding him close. “Yes, it was only intended to be a game. I thought...when you didn’t cry out...” His voice trailed off.

Yui nodded. “It’s all right. A simple misunderstanding. I suppose I did deserve it. You’re right, I failed my kitten duties.”

The Blondie laughed, and then kissed his neck. “There’s something else I want now,” he whispered, guiding the boy’s hand to his erection. He unzipped his trousers, giving him full access.

Yui began fondling him. “Did the spanking excite you?” he asked, somewhat mystified.

“Oh yes. It did.” Now Raoul kissed him hard, with purpose. “Get on your knees and bend over the divan,” he ordered.

Yui obeyed, climbing off his lap with a little smile.

Raoul got up, stroking himself as he admired Yui positioned so submissively. His bottom was still red as a cherry from his spanking, which he found terribly provocative. “Now...reach back and pull your cheeks apart. Offer yourself to me.”

The boy obeyed, looking back at him with such innocence that Raoul nearly lost his seed on the spot. The sight of Yui so freshly spanked, bent over the divan and holding himself open with such a sweet, tear-stained expression was almost too much.

Dropping to his knees, Lord Am positioned himself behind him. “Stay just like that,” he commanded, squeezing the tip of his cock up to his portal and then penetrating.

Yui cried out at first but quickly adjusted. Then he began gasping with each thrust, a sound that Raoul had come to adore.

“Soon, Yui,” he promised, “I am going to bring you pleasure, too. I talked to Heiku yesterday, and he agreed.”

Yui was delighted. He had been far too young when he had been modified at the Academy for Public Service to have ever experienced sexual gratification and could only guess at how it would feel. His Master’s proposed gift had filled him with such excitement he could hardly sleep at night. It was enough just to know that Raoul wanted to pleasure him. To learn that it was truly going to happen seemed incredible, almost incomprehensible.

Raoul's approach sent shivers down his back. Yui loved the sound of his Master climaxing. He always had—even before Raoul had begun taking him. Now, to be the one producing such pleasure in the Blondie he adored filled him with pride and pleasure.

"Yui," Raoul moaned, finally releasing.

"Master," Yui whispered, smiling.

"Meow," the kitten mewed, attacking the Blondie's irresistibly exposed thigh from behind.

Lord Am howled as the little feline sunk his claws playfully into him, his cries startling his next-door neighbor, Megala Chi, who had his ear pressed against the wall to listen to Raoul and Yui's coupling. The Blondie dropped his teacup—Xeronian tea and shards of fine Aristian porcelain flying across the floor.

"Raoul," Megala muttered grumpily.



THE SUN WAS ON THE HORIZON. Everyone in the household was quiet, aware of Master Iason's distress.

Iason sat in his chair, brooding. Riki was late. If he did not return in the next few moments, he would know that his pet was deliberately defying him. He waited anxiously, desperately hoping that the mongrel would still arrive and apologize for being tardy.

But Riki did not come.

Juthian, Katze, Daryl, Tai, and Odi all glanced at one another, aware of the magnitude of Riki's disobedience and the effect it was having on Iason.

The sun had set; Riki had not returned home.

For some moments, Iason simply continued to sit in his chair, feeling incredibly hurt. His heart felt as though it were breaking. His pet had chosen to stay away. Even though the Blondie knew he would be able to find Riki and bring him home, he was devastated that his pet had not returned voluntarily. His throat was tight; his eyes were stinging. It was almost more than he could bear that his pet did not love him the way he so desperately wanted.

Finally Katze approached him. "I'll go get him," he offered.

"Don't force him, Katze. See if he'll come willingly. If not, I'll fetch him myself."

Katze nodded, glancing over at Daryl, who raised his eyebrows at this. Everyone knew the mongrel would *really* be in for it if Iason was forced to "fetch" him.

"He's at Depravities," Iason said, handing him the tracer unit.

Katze took it and left, finding that he was actually quite angry with Riki for hurting Iason so tremendously. And he intended to let Riki know exactly what he thought of his latest transgression.



ONCE THE SUN HAD SET and Riki had officially missed his deadline to return to Eos, he began to feel uneasy. He knew that his rebellion would have repercussions, and now he began to torture himself imagining what Iason would do when he failed to return.

Guy finally noticed his silence. "Hey. Riki. What's...up?"

Riki shrugged, trying to appear unconcerned. "Nothing. I'm just a bit tired."

"Yeah. And we know *why*," Noris grinned, eliciting laughter from everyone at the table.

Guy laughed softly, pulling Riki a little closer.

Riki tried to smile, but his lips felt tight, and he could feel that his palms were starting to sweat.

"Are you worried about Kei?" Sid asked.

"Fuck no," Riki snorted.

"I'm surprised he's not here," Guy said thoughtfully.

"He said he's been busy. He's been getting orders like crazy," Noris remarked.

"Yeah. Apparently Katze has just disappeared off the scene," Luke added.

Riki made a little laugh at this. "He's trying to take on Katze? What a brainless ape."

Now everyone regarded him with curiosity.

“And...what do you know about Katze, Riki?” Guy asked, finally.

“Everyone knows Katze runs the entire underground market. That’s all I meant.”

“No one has seen him in over a week,” Luke commented.

“He’s around.” Riki lit up a smoke, taking a deep drag. “Kei’s an idiot to fuck with Katze.”

Noris lit up, too, glancing at Luke. “Yeah. They say he’s got connections with that fancy Blondie who runs the Syndicate. What’s his name?”

“Iason Mink,” Luke answered, smiling.

“Yeah. That one.”

At the mere mention of Iason’s name, Riki felt his blood run cold. He realized then that everyone was watching him carefully. He tried to shrug it off but suddenly felt paralyzed.

“Geez. Riki. You look like you’re gonna be sick,” Guy whispered.

Riki shook his head.

“Hmmm.” Noris and Luke exchanged looks.

“That doesn’t mean a bloody thing,” Guy snapped. “Fucking leave him alone.”

Noris held up his hands in a gesture of surrender. “What? I didn’t say anything.”

The mongrel watched this exchange, his heart sinking a bit. So, his gang had already heard rumors of his relationship with Iason. He had suspected as much, but this was the first time the subject had ever really come up.

“Fucking lies,” Guy muttered.

“Calm down, I was just fucking around,” Noris protested.

“Yeah, everyone knows Riki would never....” Sid fell silent, suddenly distracted by the figure that stood before them.

It was Katze. He stood with his arms across his chest, anger evident in his features.

Everyone stared at him in astonishment, except Riki, who kept his head bowed, not even looking up.

“Riki. I need to talk to you. NOW.”

The others regarded Riki with surprise, trying to make sense of the intimacy obviously shared between the two. Given that they had

just been discussing Katze only a few moments before, it was decidedly eerie that he had suddenly shown up.

Riki put out his smoke, and then got up. "I'll be back in a few minutes," he said.

As he moved away from the table, he could hear his gang whispering excitedly, and Guy's voice rising above the others, sounding angry.

Katze put his hand on Riki's back, practically pushing him out the door. Once they were outside, they moved off to a deserted spot in the alley next to the building where Katze's car was parked.

"What the fuck are you doing?" Katze demanded, his hands on his hips. "You were supposed to be back before sundown."

"I'm not going back."

"You little shit. You're an ungrateful, fucking, spoiled little brat."

"Whatever."

"You're coming with me."

"No, I'm not."

Katze answered this with a hard slap to his face. "Fucking get in the car," he ordered.

Riki shook off the slap, though his cheek burned horribly. "Fuck you," he whispered. "You're not my keeper."

Katze took hold of him by the shoulders, slamming him roughly against the building wall. "You're coming back with me, if I have to fucking beat the shit out of you, you little brat."

"I'm not coming back with you," Riki replied coldly, "and I'd like to see you try to beat me up."

"How could you do this to Iason? You're such an ungrateful, pathetic little punk!"

"He deserves it."

Katze snorted with disgust. "I should've brought my taming stick. I'd fucking tame you until you couldn't walk. How could you turn on him, Riki?"

"Because he's a fucking bastard and I hate him!" Riki shouted.

Katze sighed and then released him. "I know you don't really mean that."

"I *do* mean it."



The eunuch shook his head, pondering this for a moment. "Did something happen?"

"Yeah. What happened is he fucking took my life and my freedom away from me."

"You surprise me. You really do. I never would have thought you could be this big of an ass."

"Hmmm." Riki shrugged.

"You...really hurt him Riki. You should have seen his face."

Riki had no answer to this, feeling a little affected as he contemplated Iason's hurt feelings.

Katze lit up a smoke, sighing again. "Come back with me. You know you're going back one way or another. If you come back now, it'll be much easier for you than if he has to come fetch you."

Unable to help himself, Riki shuddered at the thought of Iason coming to "fetch" him. But he remained stubborn, shaking his head.

Katze laughed softly. "I hope you didn't have any plans involving sitting for the rest of your life. 'Cuz your ass is fucking history."

Riki scowled at this, though he knew it was true. He was not looking forward to facing Iason's wrath or his inevitable discipline. But he didn't want to back down from his position of defiance. He wanted Iason to know he would not go back to Eos voluntarily.

"Please, Riki," Katze tried again, this time more gently, "I'm begging you. Come back with me."

"No, Katze."

The two of them locked eyes for a long moment, and Katze saw that Riki was resolved in his decision to defy Iason.

"Then, you can expect that he'll come for you. My guess is he'll come get you yet tonight. If I were you, I'd say your goodbyes now. When he comes for you, he's going to be angry—and that's putting it mildly. But...you know that."

Riki nodded.

"You're so stupid," Katze remarked, shaking his head.

"Yeah," Riki conceded, with a smile.

Katze threw down his smoke, crushing it with his boot. "You'll be crying like a baby before the night's through. And you deserve it."

The mongrel answered this with a sigh.

Katze hesitated for a moment. "You won't reconsider? Come with me, Riki. I won't think less of you for backing down."

"Drop to your knees and give me head right here and now and maybe I'll consider it."

"Fuck you, ya little brat," Katze replied, punching him in his arm. "You've already had the only love you're ever getting from me."

"And it was good too."

"Of course it was."

Katze got in his vehicle, giving Riki one final look of disgust and shaking his head.

"Good luck, dumb fuck." With that, he sped off into the night.

Riki made his way back inside, trying to determine how he would explain Katze's appearance to the others. As he approached the table, the animated conversation there suddenly stopped, and they all turned to him, silent.

Riki slid in beside Guy, smiling. "Sorry about that. Katze and I had a disagreement on a few matters."

"How do you know Katze?" Guy asked.

"I run a few errands for him now and then."

Guy visibly relaxed, giving the others a look of vindication.

"I bet that's how you got so rich," Sid hypothesized.

"He sure looked pissed," Noris remarked.

Riki shrugged. "He'll get over it."

The mongrel then fell silent as the others began discussing the recent overthrow of the senate by a young commander on Alpha Zen. Finding no interest in the matter, he withdrew into his own thoughts, wondering how long it would be before Iason arrived and his true identity was, at last, fully revealed.

He knew he was in the endgame, and so he savored these last few moments with his gang when they still thought of him as he once had been. Very soon he would be returning to Eos and the dream that he was somehow still Riki the Dark, leader of Bison, would end.



THE MORE IASON THOUGHT about Riki's obstinate defiance, the angrier he became. He hoped that his pet would at least have the sense to accompany Katze back home. When the eunuch returned without him, he rose and, without a single word, left the penthouse.

He was so furious he could hardly drive. Thrusting the tracer card violently into its slot on the driver's panel, he saw that his pet was still at Depravities. He found it annoying that Riki wasn't even *trying* to hide from him but was simply waiting for him to come.

One thing was certain. Riki was in for some discipline.



"A SECOND ROUND," RIKI ANNOUNCED, when the attendant returned to inquire if Riki needed anything.

"Hooray, Sir Riki!" Sid cheered.

"Very good," the attendant said, backing away.

"Yes. Hooray, *Sir Riki*," Kei drawled.

Everyone turned to see Kei standing there, his face still a bit bruised from Riki's pounding.

"Please. Don't let me stop all the fun," he remarked, sliding in beside Guy. He leaned over, kissing Guy on the cheek. "Did you miss me, baby? Or perhaps not. Since my guess is you've been FUCKING RIKI this whole week."

Guy darkened a little at this, but said nothing.

"Why don't you fuck off already," Riki suggested.

"If I thought you were going to stick around, I *might*," Kei replied, with an inexplicable smile. "But since you'll be going soon, I think I'll stay."

"Riki's not going anywhere," Guy asserted, although he wasn't too certain, given Riki's confession that he would only be staying a few days.

"Oh? That's not what Katze seemed to think."

Riki, who had been ready to launch a sarcastic reply, remained silent, flinching slightly.

“Yes. That’s right. Heard your whole little conversation out there and I have to say it was quite intriguing. Especially the bit about you and...who was it? Ah...Iason, I think, was the name.”

At this, everyone at the table stared at Kei in a stunned silence.

“Yes. And I was so curious about this, I decided to follow Katze. And where do you suppose he went?”

Riki sunk down a little in his seat.

“No guesses? Then...I’ll tell you. He went to Eos, to that Elite tower there, you know, where the real important Blondies live? You can’t even get past security unless you live there. So, of course I got thrown out by my ear—but not before I saw what floor the elevator went to.”

The mongrel scowled, but Kei only smiled back, thoroughly enjoying his discomfort.

“He went up to the penthouse. And I do believe, unless I’m quite mistaken, that the penthouse is reserved for the Head of the Syndicate. Which would be...Iason Mink.”

When Riki did not try to deny this, Guy turned to him, puzzled. “Riki. Is this Iason...the one you’re involved with?”

Kei snorted at this. “Involved,” he repeated. “That’s rich.”

“Fucking shut up, Kei,” Guy hissed.

“Oh,” Kei whispered, “you’re really in for it later. But I’m sure you know that.”

“Quit being a dick. I told you, Kei. We’re over.”

Kei slid his hand down Guy’s thigh. “I don’t think so, hon. But you’re going to regret that little remark.”

“Keep your fucking hands off him,” Riki snapped.

“I don’t take orders from a *pet*.”

The others, thinking this was simply an insult, were perplexed when Riki backed off. The mongrel looked surprised, his eyes wide.

Kei smiled triumphantly. “Yes. Your little secret is out.”

Suddenly Riki’s handheld phone began to buzz, startling him and everyone else at the table.

“You’d better get that,” Kei advised. “That’s your Master calling.”

Riki made no move to answer the call. He sat silently, staring down at the table, his cheeks flushing red. The phone continued to

buzz seemingly forever, much to his mortification. The others watched him, exchanging puzzled glances, while Kei continued to taunt him.

"You're going to be in trouble, little pet. Your Master's going to be very angry if you don't answer when he calls you."

Guy looked back and forth between Kei and Riki, confused. "What are you talking about?"

"Go ahead. Tell them. Or should I?"

Riki glared at him but made no reply.

"All right then. I'll tell them, since they're all too stupid to figure it out from what I said. Riki is the pet of Iason Mink."

This was not the first time any of them had heard the rumor, but it was the first time it had been presented with any sort of veracity.

Guy shook his head. "That's a lie." He studied Riki for a moment, his brow furrowed with concern. "Right, Riki?"

The mongrel didn't answer. He knew this was the time to come clean, but somehow he couldn't bring himself to admit to it. He felt uncomfortable and trapped; when he looked up and saw Iason walking toward the table, he almost felt relieved.

The others were visibly alarmed when they realized the Blondie was approaching them.

"Shit," Noris whispered. "It's *him*."

Iason carried his gold-plated chains, the ones he had specially made for Riki, with his own initials imprinted on the cuffs.

"Pet," he commanded, his voice razor-sharp. "Get up. We're going home."

"I guess he missed his curfew then? So...does that mean he'll be punished?" Kei asked, smiling.

Iason's gaze fell on Kei's face for half a second. "That is not your concern," he said coldly.

A little put off by this, not to mention intimidated by the famous Blondie, Kei fell silent.

Riki stood up, sliding past Sid and Noris. He stood before Iason, head down. The Blondie fastened his chains angrily, slamming the cuffs closed and putting his collar on roughly. He attached the arm cuff to his own wrist, snapping it shut.

Everyone watched this in astonishment, except Kei, who was delighting in Riki's humiliation. He felt vindicated. Never in his wildest dreams could he have imagined a more perfect departure for his rival.

Guy, noticing the initials carved on the cuffs, remembered Riki's tattoo and, at last, what he had tried to deny for so long then became clear to him. The rumors were true. Riki really was the pet of Iason Mink.

Riki reached for his helmet.

"Leave it," Iason said curtly.

"But...I'm taking my bike, right?"

"No. It's served its purpose."

Disappointed, but not surprised, Riki then dared a look at Guy, who was staring at him in disbelief. He reached into his pocket, throwing his key on the table. "Take it, Guy. I'm...sorry."

Guy let the key remain where it fell, a look of disgust creeping onto his face. "You lied to me this whole time. You're truly his pet?"

Iason, who had been about to drag Riki off, paused for a moment to see how he would respond.

"Yes," Riki admitted, finally, his voice barely a whisper.

Satisfied, Iason left, striding from the club so quickly Riki was forced to run to keep pace with him.

"You're worthless," Guy called after him. "Don't ever come back!"

Riki turned to look back. "*You can trust me. Whatever it is. I'll always be here for you,*" he mocked bitterly, repeating the promise Guy had made him earlier that week.

Iason yanked on his neck chain, forcing him to turn around. "Silence," he snapped.

"Don't come back, shithead!" Kei yelled. "No *pets* allowed!"

"You can come back if you wanna perform for us, Sir Riki," Noris quipped, and everyone laughed.

Face burning, Riki obeyed his Master and did not reply. It was the response he had expected and yet, to be so soundly rejected by his former gang was devastating. Everyone in the bar turned to watch him as the Blondie escorted him out in chains. Riki felt broken and defeated. He knew now, with utter certainty, that he

could never return to Ceres. His little dream, his fantasy week, was over. He was going back to Eos to serve his Master.

His heart was starting to pound a bit now that he was near Iason. The scent of the Blondie was intoxicating, as always, and he found that he longed to be in bed with him, but he knew he would have to endure a rather unpleasant agenda of discipline first. And he was not looking forward to that.

Iason, despite his anger, was so glad to have his pet back in his company that he was strongly tempted to take Riki in the car. But first he needed to deal with his pet's insubordination. And to do that properly he needed...more space.

"Can we go back to the hotel to get my clothes?" Riki asked softly.

"No."

"Please...I...left something there I want. And I really like my new clothes. Please?"

Sighing, Iason pushed Riki into the car from his side and then slid in himself, chains jangling loudly. "Very well," he conceded.

"Thanks."

As soon as the door closed, Iason reached out and grabbed Riki by the hair, pulling his head back. "You're going to be punished tonight," he warned.

"I know."

"I'm not going to be easy on you."

Riki had no reply to this and started to tremble, despite himself.

Iason leaned closer to whisper in his ear. "I'm very angry with you." He stroked his cheek with a gloved finger. "You're going to find out just how angry I am."

The mongrel remained silent as Iason started up the generator. He expected his Master to reprimand him continuously on the trip, but the Blondie was quiet, which Riki found somehow even more disconcerting. He was too upset to notice that Iason seemed to know exactly where to go. When they arrived at the hotel, Iason parked in front in the restricted zone, as usual.

The attendant rushed out to confront him but upon seeing who emerged from the vehicle, bowed.

"Good evening, Lord Mink."

Iason nodded, dragging Riki behind him and pulling sharply on his chain. The mongrel struggled to keep up but found no matter what he did, he was rewarded by another sharp tug from his Master. When they reached his room, Riki started to put his hand on the entrance panel but was surprised when the door automatically opened for Iason.

“Do all doors open for you?” he whispered.

“The door opened because you’re my registered pet. My genetic signature is automatically programmed into your registration. Wherever you are, I have immediate access.”

“Oh,” Riki muttered, feeling a little foolish for not realizing this.

“Get your things,” Iason instructed, removing the cuff from his arm to allow his pet some movement.

The mongrel then rushed to his bedroom and gathered everything, tossing his clothes into the bags he’d kept from the store. He grabbed the gift he’d bought for Iason and threw that in as well, deciding the moment wasn’t right to give it to him. It would seem too much like a bribe to cut his punishment short.

When he emerged, he found Iason at the bar, drinking brandy.

“I’m ready,” he murmured, shivering a little. He knew Iason only drank brandy when he was very angry.

Iason finished the brandy, slamming his glass on the table. “Put those down, in that chair there.”

Riki obeyed, looking a little confused.

The Blondie then unbuckled his belt, whipping it out and folding it in half. “Let’s get part of your punishment out of the way,” he said, walking toward him menacingly. “Lower your trousers, and put your hands flat on that table.”

Sighing, Riki did so without resisting, knowing that he had it coming. He stood, waiting, the air making goose bumps appear on his bare ass.

Iason was examining him, puzzled by the small bruises there. His pet had obviously already been spanked...by *someone*. He walked back and forth, his anger building. Finally he unleashed his frustration on his waiting pet, striking him repeatedly, brutally, his arm whipping back with wicked resolve.



Riki initially tried not to cry out, in order to make his position of defiance retain some dignity; but in the end he was reduced to vocalizing his pain with every strike, tears blinding his eyes.

“Naughty pet,” Iason scolded, continuing to strap him mercilessly. “You’ll obey me, Riki, in all things. This is just a taste of what’s in store for you tonight. When we get home, you’re getting the paddle.”

The mongrel whimpered at this, already miserable.

“I really ought to give you a good whipping,” the Blondie added, though he did not seriously intend to subject his pet to the brutality of a whip.

Now each strike from Iason elicited a loud reaction from his pet, whose ass was dark with scarlet belt-marks, and who was beginning to find the punishment intolerable.

“You’re starting to feel it now, I think? Does this answer your defiance, pet?”

“Please,” Riki pleaded. “Iason, please.”

“You’ll call me Master,” the Blondie hissed, unleashing a new onslaught of punishing strikes.

Overcome with pain, Riki found that he could not reply, not even to say the word he was now quite prepared to say: *Master*.

“Surely you didn’t think you could disobey me without severe punishment,” Iason scolded.

Riki accepted his punishment miserably, keeping his hands on the table despite a powerful urge to flee. He’d learned, finally, not to try to escape a discipline session. Tears streamed down his cheeks, huge drops splattering onto the table, and his shoulders shook with his sobs.

Finally, Iason stopped. Confident that he’d conveyed some of his anger and that the mongrel had suffered in the process, his heart softened a bit upon hearing his rather pathetic sobs. Though the punishment had ceased, Riki remained in position, dutifully waiting to be told to move.

Iason tossed his belt aside. “Riki,” he said, his voice softer now. “I didn’t want our reunion to be like this, but you left me no choice.” He approached him, touching his reddened flesh with his gloved

hand. "Why didn't you come back to me?" he whispered, his voice quivering a little. "Why, Riki?"

"Because," Riki answered between sobs, "because you didn't trust me. Because you came looking for me."

Puzzled, Iason thought about this for a moment. "But I only came for you because you refused to come back on your own."

Riki shook his head. "No. I mean...before. Earlier today when you came with Enyu."

For a long moment, Iason was quiet, his heart pounding. Was this all...some sort of misunderstanding?

"Then, that is the only reason you did not come back?"

"Yes."

Iason closed his eyes, sighing. "Pet. I did not come looking for you. Enyu is no longer in my care. I gave him to Omaki Ghan, who owns the club Depravities. He must have taken Enyu to the club for some reason."

Now it was Riki's turn to be surprised, and for a stunned moment, he digested this information, which carried two critical bits of news: first, that Iason had *not* come looking for him, and second, that Riki no longer had to compete with cat-boy for Iason's attention and affection.

"Then...then," Riki whispered, his voice hoarse from crying. "Then you...really didn't come after me?"

"No, pet." Iason answered gently.

"Oh fuck," Riki moaned. "I thought you didn't trust me."

"So...you would have come back on your own, Riki?"

"Of course. I wanted to come back," he admitted. "I don't really belong here anymore."

Iason turned him around, looking down into his eyes. "Riki," he breathed, bending down to kiss him.

As soon as their lips touched, it was as though a torrent of passion was unleashed. They kissed one another longingly, hungrily. Iason felt as though he could not get enough of his pet, picking him up and setting him on the table and then kissing him even more passionately. Riki was so aroused, he did not even care that he was forced to sit on his punished ass.

Iason removed a glove and began fondling him, pleased to find a rigid erection awaiting him.

Riki moaned in response to his touch, his eyes rolling back. Everything about being with Iason felt right: he welcomed his Master's every touch, the teasing softness of his hair on his legs, his incredible scent, his perfect kiss.

Iason stopped and, lifting him up, carried him to the bed, where he set him down gently. He undressed, and Riki did so as well, not needing to be told. The mongrel lay there, completely naked but for his chains, fondling himself anxiously and wiggling a bit on the bed in his excitement.

Eyes shining, Iason crawled onto the bed toward him. His gaze moved to Riki's new nipple ring and he paused, surprised.

"What's this?" He reached out and touched the ring, and Riki smiled, enjoying his reaction.

"Like it? I had it done just for you. I remembered that one time you said you wanted me pierced, so I figured you'd like it."

"You did that for me?" Iason whispered. He slid on top of the mongrel, opening his legs with his body.

"Yes. It hurt like hell too."

"Oh, Riki," Iason sighed, kissing his face and then his neck. "I've missed you so."

Riki groaned, so aroused that he could hardly think straight. "I've missed you, too."

Hands shaking, Iason reached down to fondle him a bit more, and then brought his pet's hand to his own immense erection. Riki began stroking him, which sent shivers through the Blondie. The sound of the pet chains jangling was a source of arousal in and of itself. His eyes gravitated to a small vial on the bedside table.

"Is that oil?" he asked.

"Yeah," Riki replied, feeling a little embarrassed.

Although Iason wasn't too pleased with this glimpse into his pet's activities, he decided that all that mattered at the moment was that it was oil and that they needed it. He reached out and grabbed the vial, pouring a generous amount into his pet's waiting hand.

Riki began lubricating him, and Iason responded with a groan.



© Reunited ©

Art by Tata



“Ohhh, pet,” he gasped. “I’m so ready for you, love.”

“I’m about ready to shoot my wad,” Riki replied with equal passion, though a little less romantically.

With that, Iason entered him, pleased when he slid right in. He’d truly broken his pet in now and could enjoy sex without feeling constrained by Riki’s smaller physiology. Yet he was still tight, so tight that the Blondie shivered. “Riki...you feel like heaven.”

Iason proceeded to give him a good fucking—slowly at first, and then with more speed and intensity as they both became increasingly excited.

Riki was beside himself with pleasure. With sudden insight, he realized how inferior sex with Guy had been in comparison to the Blondie who now took him with such gentle authority. Everything about Iason aroused him—his every touch was almost magical in its effect, and the mongrel found that all he wanted was to be in his arms. How he could ever have wanted to pair with Guy now seemed a mystery to him.

He grabbed onto Iason’s arms, suddenly aware that he was going to climax. Iason slowed his pace and then stopped, leaning down to watch him and clutching the sheets in his hands. The Blondie was just on the verge of orgasm and trying to contain himself. His hair fell across his pet’s chest, its exotic, deliciously erotic scent proving the final, fatal stimulus.

Riki came, crying out loudly.

At this, Iason immediately released, throwing his head back, his long blond hair flipping back in an immense arc.

“Holy shit,” Riki gasped, after a moment.

Withdrawing slowly, Iason smiled down at his pet, feeling a similar though perhaps less vulgarly-worded sentiment. “You were exquisite,” he whispered.

“Yeah. I really missed that.”

Iason rolled onto his back, pulling him close. “You’re never leaving me again,” he asserted.

Riki made no reply, at the moment not even caring.

Iason sighed, kissing his cheek. “I want to love you all night.”

“You forgive me then?”

Iason laughed, hugging him tighter. "Yes. I forgive you, pet."

"Good, because my ass feels like it's on fire."

The Blondie answered that with a playful spank to his behind. "You deserved it."

The mongrel gave a little yelp. "That fucking hurt," he grumbled. "So...you're not going to paddle me when we get home?"

Smiling at his pet's concern over the remaining agenda of punishment, he touched his nose with his finger. "That depends on how good you are."

"I'll be good. I promise," Riki answered, a saucy smile tugging at his lips.

"Mmmm," the Blondie replied, pulling him close. "I like the sound of that."

"Hey. I have to get something...can I bring you a drink?"

"Wine would be lovely, pet."

Riki rose to leave, and Iason seized his hand, staying him. Then he released his pet from his chains, uncuffing him and removing his collar. The mongrel bent down, kissed him on the forehead and then left, a mysterious smile tugging his lips.

Iason could not help but smile at the sight of his punished bottom. It was good to have his pet back, and after discovering that a simple misunderstanding had been the root cause of Riki's rebellion, he was feeling much better. Quite good in fact.

Riki brought him a glass of wine, and as Iason began to take a sip, he was surprised when the mongrel set a small box on his stomach. "What's this?" he asked.

"Just something I got for you," Riki replied.

"Something you..." Iason fell silent, unable to finish his thought. He set his wine glass down, picking up the box with trembling fingers. Then he opened it, staring at its contents in complete surprise. "Riki," he whispered, astonished.

"You like them?" Riki grinned. "They're cool, aren't they? They're from Aristia."

"Aristian amber crystal," the Blondie said, nodding.

Iason had always loved Aristian crystal, though he'd never owned any. The earrings were exceptional—exactly the sort of thing he

would pick out for himself. But more than this he was touched by his pet's thoughtfulness.

"Really? Then you like them, right? I thought they would look good on you, you know, with your...hair and stuff."

Iason was so affected by his pet's gift that his eyes began to sting with tears.

Riki, on apprehending his expression, looked disappointed. "What's wrong? You don't like them?"

"Riki," Iason whispered, looking at him so intently that the mongrel almost felt uncomfortable. "You bought these...*for me*?"

Nodding, Riki was a little surprised when Iason suddenly sat up, throwing his arms around him and hugging him tight.

"My pet," Iason breathed. "I love you...so very much. You mean everything to me."

Relaxing, Riki smiled. "So...you *do* like them, then."

"I absolutely adore them."

Iason immediately removed the sapphires he was wearing and replaced them with the new studs.

"What do you think?"

The gems glittered almost magically, changing colors with Iason's slightest movement.

The mongrel grinned. "They look good on you. I knew they would. You're sexy as hell. I was thinking that—"

His words were cut short when Iason began kissing him, slowly and deeply. He pulled Riki back onto the bed with him and they began another round of lovemaking, one of many that night. Whenever they finished one session, one or the other would become aroused again, and so they would start anew. Thus passed their night together in Apatia, to the equal satisfaction of Master and pet.



# 12

## Belonging

“WANNA SEE MY PICTURE?” Aki stared up at Omaki, eyes round, hesitantly waiting to be invited up onto his lap.

The Blondie smiled, holding out his hands. “Of course.”

Aki scrambled onto his lap, holding up his artistic creation proudly. It depicted Iason’s fishpond, full of colorful, bulgy-eyed fish, all hungrily eating from Aki’s proffered food offerings.

“Is it good?” he asked, a little uncertainly.

“It is absolutely *stupendous*, Sir Aki. You are going to be a famous artist one day.”

Smiling happily, Aki leaned back against Omaki’s chest and admired his work. The Blondie kissed the top of his head and began to make specific comments about the picture, which the boy continued to hold up as if on display.

“That one right there is my favorite.” Lord Ghan pointed to a bright red fish with a black stripe down the back.

“That’s the mean one,” Aki informed him.

“Ah. I might have suspected as much.”

“He’s gonna try and eat all the other ones and then take over the whole pond for himself,” he explained excitedly, swirling his finger in a large circle to illustrate the dramatic political situation in the tiny pond.

“I see. So, my love, supposing he succeeds with this barbaric, cannibalistic design, won’t he be lonely in the pond all by himself?”

Aki paused for a moment, considering these ramifications. “He has to be alone,” he answered sadly. “Because that’s just who he is.”

Omaki smiled at this, hugging him close. “Ah, Aki. No one has to be alone, no matter who they are. Some folks just *choose* to be alone.”

Aki pondered this, letting the picture fall to his lap. "What about someone who smells really bad?"

"Even such an individual, despite his more unfortunate qualities, can still find someone to be with."

"He should look for someone without a nose," Aki reflected philosophically.

"You are on the right track, my sweet one. Or perhaps someone who simply can't smell well."

"Or maybe he should take a bath!" Aki exclaimed, pointing his finger up at the ceiling in his excitement.

"Speaking of which, Aki, have *you* taken your bath?" Lord Ghan asked, knowing full well that the boy had not.

Aki let his hand fall, suddenly going limp in his Master's lap. "I don't wanna take a bath," he whined, as if the Blondie had just suggested he saw off his foot.

Omaki smiled at his melodramatic performance. "And here we were just talking about the perils of being a smelly."

"I don't care if I smell. I can find someone who loves me the way I am," Aki asserted.

"For the record, Aki, *I* love you just the way you are. However, it is time for your bath. So, obey me, and go take one."

Sighing, Aki slid down the Blondie's leg and ran off to the bath hall. Omaki turned to Enyu, who had been waiting in the corner of the room, somewhat impatiently, for Aki to go to bed. "Now, my pet, are you ready for our special time?"

"Yes, Master," Enyu replied eagerly.

"Then, why don't you pour yourself a drink...and a scotch for me."

Smiling happily, Enyu rose to obey his request.

An alert suddenly sounded at the door.

"Who could that be?" Omaki wondered aloud. He strode over to the door, looking at the viewer. It was a young male, holding a messenger capsule. The Blondie opened the door.

"Messenger capsule for Lord Omaki Ghan," the youth said, with a thick Aristian accent. He looked up at him wearily.

"How peculiar," Omaki remarked. "I can't imagine who that would be from. Do you know?"

The boy shook his head, handing him the capsule. Omaki took it. It was incredibly light. "Are you sure there's something in here?"

The boy shrugged. "Dunno. That's just what they gave me."

Lord Ghan studied him for a moment. The boy was trembling. "Are you...*cold*?"

He nodded. "I am not used to it here."

"You're...Aristian, aren't you?"

"Yes."

"Hmmm. It can get very chilly here at nights, even when the days are warm. Didn't you bring a jacket of some kind?"

Hesitating for a moment, the youth shook his head.

"Are you going back to your ship now?"

"No. I have to wait for my next job. It doesn't start until tomorrow with a different ship."

"Then...where are you going to stay?"

The Aristian looked a little uncertain. "I dunno. They gave me...2000 paper credits."

Omaki scoffed at that. "2000? Is that all you earned for your trouble? You can hardly get a good room for that, let alone food."

At this, the boy looked a little worried.

The Blondie smiled kindly, moving aside and gesturing into his penthouse. "Would you like to come inside for a while where it's warm? Maybe you would like something to eat?"

A gleam of excitement flashed in the youth's eyes, but he hesitated.

"Don't worry. I have my own pet. I won't try to solicit sexual favors from you," Omaki said reassuringly. "Surely you know that in Amoi you can always trust a Blondie. We are required by the General Code to assist strangers in need. Jupiter insists on it. So?"

Offering a brief, tentative smile, the messenger nodded, slowly stepping inside. Upon seeing the luxury of the suites within, his eyes widened. Never before had he seen such a place. A fire burned pleasantly in the hearth, its crackles and warmth relaxing him.

"This is Enyu, my pet," Omaki said. "He's from Xeron."

Enyu smiled at the attractive youth, eyeing him over.

Kahlan looked at him nervously, nodding shyly.

"And you are—?" the Blondie prodded.

“Kahlan.”

Lord Ghan studied him again, observing the bruises above his elbows. Someone had obviously handled him a little roughly. He was a handsome young man with dark hair and surprisingly blue eyes, but he had a haunted look about him, like someone who had seen more tragedy than his years should have allowed. And he looked emaciated.

“You must be hungry. I’ll have Ru make you something.”

“I can do that, if you would like, Master,” Enyu offered, knowing that Ru had already put in a long day and was relaxing in his room. “I know how to make an Aristian omelet.”

Kahlan perked up at the mention of a familiar food he’d not had in some time—a comfort food, one that reminded him of a time when things had been easier...and when there had been someone to care if he was hungry or not.

Omaki nodded, pleased. “Good. Then why don’t you go sit by the fire, Kahlan, and warm up. I’ll find you some warmer clothes.”

A little ashamed to be accepting so much from strangers, but extremely grateful, Kahlan immediately went to the fire, sighing from its warmth.

He had been cold for days now, miserable and unable to sleep. The ship was run by a trader from Alpha Zen, who was accustomed to brutal cold and always kept the temperature uncomfortably low. Amoi was far warmer in comparison, but by now Kahlan was so weakened from the cold and lack of food that he was simply unable to stop shivering.

He marveled over the kindness of this Blondie, Omaki Ghan, who had invited him into his home so freely, although he found the distant screaming extremely disconcerting and wondered what sort of place Amoi was.

Omaki returned with a warm-looking sweater of dark gray fibers. It was simple, and yet very well made. The boy could tell immediately that it was something well beyond his means.

“This might be a little big on you, but you’ll grow into it.”

Kahlan reached out to accept the sweater, holding it uncertainly. “You’re...*giving* this to me?”

"I'm not only giving it to you, I'm insisting that you take it. A messenger needs to be properly dressed. What if you have a job that takes you to Alpha Zen?"

The youth looked down at the sweater, admiring it. "This is...very fine. Thank you, Lord Ghan."

Omaki smiled. "Put it on."

Kahlan did so, immediately feeling the difference. At last...he had stopped shivering.

"Your omelet is ready, Kahlan," Enyu announced, placing a plate on the table.

The boy scrambled to his feet, no longer concerned about appearing too eager. He was famished, and the familiar aromas from the kitchen had been torturing him. As soon as he sat down, it was evident to both Omaki and Enyu that the boy had not eaten in some time.

"Enyu," Omaki said quietly. "Could you make another one?"

"Of course, Master," the Xeronian answered, watching Kahlan with a growing sense of pity. Having never worried about having enough to eat, Enyu hardly knew what to think when confronted with a boy that seemed to be barely surviving.

The Blondie was having similar thoughts, wondering what sort of story lay behind Kahlan's current state and how he came to be a messenger at such a young age. Not wanting to reveal his thoughts by staring, he turned away, remembering the messenger capsule that Kahlan had brought. He picked it up and sat down in a chair by the fire. It was so unusual to receive any sort of correspondence via messenger capsule that he simply turned the capsule around in his hands for a moment, trying to guess at its contents. A formal invitation to some sort of event, perhaps? It was just like Xanthus Kahn to utilize the ancient formality of a messenger capsule for one of his cotillions.

He finally turned the knob on the end to release the holding coil. The capsule sprung open, revealing a book. Curious, he picked it up and flipped it over, staring at the monogrammed cover first with confusion, then recognition, and then—disbelief.

It was Yousi's seal.

Slowly he opened the book, and read the following:



*Day 14, Month 11, Year 5134*

*Greetings, my dearest friend.*

*I hope this finds you well. If you are reading this, my plan has failed, and by now I am either dead or no longer known to you, if, as I suspect, Jupiter decides to tamper with my mind. In truth, I would rather be dead than a walking imbecile, running a smoke shop or some other hideously degrading occupation. So I hope you are now reading this and remembering me as your former friend, who has since passed from this world. If not, Sweet Mother of Amoi...please be so good as to shoot me in the head.*

*As I write this, I have set into motion a chain of events that will result in this package arriving to you on Amoi if I am not, for whatever reason, able to put a stop to it, exactly five years from the date of this letter. I have done this so that something of great importance may come to you, my dear friend, who alone I trust on this barren planet, to take whatever action you deem fit.*

*You are holding in your hands my logs, which will explain to you why I believe that Jupiter can be brought down. Please understand this: since you are reading this, what you are holding was deemed dangerous enough by Jupiter that I am now no longer with you. Perhaps it is best that you simply destroy the logs. But I leave that decision to you.*

*I will always remain your eternal friend.*

*Yousi*

*PostScript: As I write this I am looking at the holopic you made when the three of us took that Aristian virgin. The look on Jason's face is priceless. I think he felt sorry for her. Is he still Jupiter's golden boy? If so, Jason will be key...you cannot go against Jupiter without him.*

Omaki was shaking. He let the book fall into his lap. It was as though, for that brief moment, Lord Yousi Xuuju had appeared before him again, his vibrancy and intellect pushing through the paper and over the boundaries of time and space to speak to him one last time.

Lord Xuuju never had the opportunity to say goodbye to anyone. Jupiter had him seized at his villa on Lake Erphanes, and the next time Omaki saw him, he was no longer the Blondie he once knew.

Omaki struggled to get his emotions under control. His thoughts were racing. Yousi was gone; it was foolish to react so to a letter written years before, and yet he found that he could not help but react to it. Yousi had been his dearest friend.

And then...there was the content of the letter. Yousi was giving him the logs. The very logs that Jupiter deemed dangerous enough to completely destroy Yousi, rendering him cognitively impotent. The same logs that he and Iason had so recently discussed.

Enyu, sensing his Master's distress, came to him. "Is something wrong, Master?"

For a moment, the Blondie contemplated telling him about the contents of the capsule but then decided the information was far too sensitive to share with his pet, much as he trusted Enyu. He would speak of the matter to no one until he first spoke with Iason.

He shook his head. "It is nothing of any real importance. A business worry, that is all."

Omaki reached out and took Enyu's hand, pulling him closer.

"I haven't forgotten our special time," he whispered. "Tonight, just plan on sleeping with me in my bed."

Enyu beamed at this, delighted to be spending the entire night with his Master.

Lord Ghan looked over at Kahlan and saw that the youth was about to fall asleep sitting at the table. Finally fed and warm, Kahlan was so comfortable that his eyes kept fluttering shut. He struggled to stay awake, shaking his head.

"I have plenty of guestrooms here, Kahlan," the Blondie said softly. "Why don't you just stay here tonight? You look like you could use some sleep."

Kahlan was too exhausted to object. He had been up for three nights straight, and the thought of sleeping in what was sure to be a comfortable bed was too tempting to resist. "Thank you."

"Enyu, can you show him to the guestroom next to your room?"

"Of course, Master," the Xeronian replied.

Kahlan rose and followed him, shooting Omaki a grateful look.

Lord Ghan then went to assess Aki's progress in his bathing project. He found the boy in his room, naked and wet, pacing about in the frenzied way that he did when he was in need of some sleep.

"Aki," Omaki scolded. "Where are your clothes? You'll catch a cold, or worse."

"I like being naked," the boy replied, yawning.

"Go get dressed; it's time for bed. I assume you left your pajamas in the bath hall?"

The boy ignored this directive, choosing instead to walk in a circle, kicking one leg high in the air for no particular reason.

"Aki."

"I'm Commander Khosi from Alpha Zen."

"Are you listening to me? I told you to get ready for bed."

"No—Commander Aki! Commander Aki, ruler of Amoi! I'm gonna build slides everywhere!"

"Aki, this is your *last* warning. Do as I say or I'll sit down right there on that bed, turn you over my knee and turn your bottom red as an Aristian apple. Would you like that?"

This last threat seemed to register in the boy's head, for he froze, foot straight out in front of him, and then slowly turned his body robotically toward the door. Then he began moving lethargically out of the room, his feet sliding across the floor in large, sweeping steps.

Omaki could not help but smile as he watched him go. But then his thoughts grew dark as he contemplated the boy's approaching departure. He could hardly bear the thought of it.

He wondered if Iason would agree to become his Guardian. He desperately hoped so, for Aki's sake. He'd thought also about asking Heiku, but he knew that Aki was terrified of the Blondie because of his robotic arm. Although he was certain the boy would become accustomed to it, probably even come to admire it, he hated the



thought of putting him in a place that frightened him from the start. At least, with Iason, he knew that Aki would love the fishpond and the gardens and pools; in fact, the whole penthouse would be fun for the boy to explore. Also, he could tell that Aki liked Juthian—and that Juthian was fond of him.

But it was more than this. Lord Ghan felt that if Iason became his Guardian, he would develop an attachment to him and that the boy would ultimately have the protection of Jupiter through Iason's influence. He dreaded telling Aki that he would be sending him away. Just the thought of the inevitable tears made him angry, and he resented Jupiter for interfering in his private life.

He forced these more disturbing thoughts out of his head as Aki returned, now dressed, with his pajama top inside out. "Now how did you manage to get that top inside out?"

"I like it this way," Aki asserted.

"But that way, all the stitches are showing."

"That's why I like it."

"I see. Well, I must say, it suits you very well."

Aki arched his back proudly. "I'm gonna wear *all* my clothes inside out!"

"For now, let's just restrict that practice to your pajama top," Lord Ghan replied. "Now, get into bed, Commander Aki."

Delighted with this new appellation, Aki grinned happily as he climbed into bed and scooted under the covers. He wiggled around, enjoying the feel of the cool sheets on his legs as he spread them and closed them.

The Blondie leaned down to kiss him, his long hair tickling the boy's face. Aki giggled.

"Good night, Aki," Omaki whispered, kissing him on the cheek.

"Night, Master," came the sweet reply.

Omaki rose to leave.

"Wait! I didn't get to kiss you!" Aki screamed.

Lord Ghan leaned down to accept the proffered kiss, again eliciting another series of giggles when his hair brushed against Aki's face. The transfer of affections thus mutually established, Omaki left the boy to his dreams.



“MASTER IASON HAS BEEN GONE a long time,” Daryl observed, voicing what all of them were thinking.

Katze nodded, looking at the tracer readout on the monitor. “At this point, I think they must be staying at the hotel.” He sighed, looking up at Tai, who was standing by the kitchen, waiting. “It’s nearly 9:00. I say let’s eat.”

His decree created a happy commotion as everyone scrambled to the table.

“I’m starving,” Daryl whined.

“Me too,” Juthian said quietly, trembling a little from hunger.

Tai rushed in, setting covered dishes onto the table and shaking his head. “It will not be good,” he fretted.

“Relax,” Katze replied, taking a bite of a roll. “It’s perfect. Sit down and eat with us.”

Hesitating only momentarily, Tai accepted the invitation, feeling as famished as everyone else.

“Odi,” Katze called. “Put that thing down and come eat. What are you doing, anyway?”

Odi sighed, attaching the detector unit to his belt. “Trying to find hidden cameras. Iason suspects he’s being spied on by Jupiter.”

“No shit?” Katze shook his head. “That’s not good.”

“But I can’t find anything. I’ve searched the whole penthouse three times.”

“Did you try looking for residuals?” Daryl asked.

Odi blinked. “No, I don’t have the right equipment for that here...but that’s bloody brilliant. I should have thought of that.”

“What’s a residual?” Tai asked.

“It’s a...frequency imprint that’s left behind when certain types of units are used—kind of like a magnetic field.” Odi explained.

“You mean to find out if a device was used that isn’t here now?”

“Precisely.” Odi smiled at Daryl. “You’re a smart kid.”

Daryl shrugged. “Thanks.”

Then Odi called in Askel and Freyn, who looked a little apprehensive about leaving their posts.

“Don’t worry about it. We’re all here if someone tries to break in,” Odi said, grinning. “I’ll blow their heads off without even leaving the table.”

This elicited some laughter, and soon the happy crew of seven chatted merrily as they enjoyed their late dinner.

“I still can’t believe Riki refused to come back with you,” Daryl remarked, feeling a little worried for the mongrel.

Katze rolled his eyes. “He’s an idiot.”

“That’s just about the angriest I’ve seen Iason in a while. Oh, but there was that day of the art exhibit—he was pretty mad then too. I thought he was going to beat Riki to death with that taming stick.”

“Didn’t he get tamed that same day at the Emporium, in front of everyone?” Katze remembered.

Daryl nodded. “That’s what I heard. Raoul insisted on it. Exposed. Yeah, I guess that was the angriest I’ve seen him, that morning of the art exhibit.”

“I think you’re forgetting another day when he was a little irate, not so long ago, love,” Katze whispered.

For a moment Daryl looked confused, and then he blushed. “Oh. Right. Of course.”

“What’s this?” Odi pried. “Come on. Spill it.”

Katze shook his head. “Daryl and I got this incredibly stupid idea to talk Riki into a threesome.”

Daryl shuddered, remembering the day Iason caught them all in bed together.

“You’re lucky he didn’t kill you both,” Freyn commented, raising his eyebrows.

“We know,” Katze replied.

Freyn turned to Askel, frowning. “Would you stop doing that?”

Askel looked bewildered. “What? I’m not doing anything.”

“Quit making that sound with your teeth.”

“I’m bloody trying to eat!”

“You’re always making that sound, it’s annoying as hell.”

“What fucking sound?”

"It's that sound you make—like this." Freyn demonstrated by grinding his teeth.

"That's called chewing, moron!"

"No, when you do it you sound like a skeleton."

"What the fuck does that mean?"

"Would you two knock it off already," Odi interjected.

"But how the hell does a skeleton sound?" Askel demanded.

"You know what I mean."

"I said knock it off, or I'll pound ya both," Odi snapped. "I'm sick to death of your arguing all the time."

"We're not arguing," Askel protested. "We're just engaged in brotherly banter."

"So," Odi continued, ignoring this and turning back to Katze, "is that why Iason whipped you?"

Katze shook his head. "No, that was for the blow job I gave Riki before that."

Odi shook his head, grinning. "You've got balls, kid."

"Actually, no."

Everyone laughed at that.

"I have to tell you, that whipping looked pretty brutal."

Concerned, Daryl turned to Katze for some confirmation of the accuracy of his statement.

Aware that Daryl was watching him, Katze shrugged. "It wasn't so bad."

"I've heard a whipping is the worst possible kind of pain there is," Freyn remarked.

At this, Juthian dropped his fork, staring down at his plate.

"I can think of a worse pain," Katze said, studying Juthian.

"Oh? And what would that be?" Odi asked.

"Having your heart broken."

"Oh. Yes," Odi conceded. "That bites."

"So, who broke *your* heart, Katze?" Askel asked.

Feeling a little uncomfortable answering this in front of Daryl, Katze replied by flipping him off.

Juthian barely heard the rest of the conversation. The talk about whippings had brought back with full force the day his Master had

subjected him to the brutality of a public whipping. Juthian was still hurting from that day, from all that his Master had whispered in his ear: that he was a bad pet and how disappointed he was in him, reiterating the obedience expected from pets and how he had utterly failed in his duties. Juthian had been extraordinarily hurt that Lord Sami would put him through such a horrible experience. The whipping itself had been ungodly. He could never have imagined such agony was possible.

Then, to be modified afterwards...all of it was still fresh in his mind—the horror and unbearable loss, not just of part of his body, but of his Master’s affections as well.

In an instant, everything had changed irrevocably.

One thing, however, was puzzling to Juthian: his Master’s kiss. It made no sense, given all that had just transpired. The kiss almost made him believe...or hope...that the Blondie still had feelings for him. Or that maybe he regretted letting him go.

But on the day he was given to Iason, Xian had chosen to pair with the Xeronian, without even giving him a second thought.

Juthian knew he needed to put aside his foolish attachment to Lord Sami. And yet, he also knew that Katze was right. There was no pain worse than that of a broken heart.



RIKI OPENED HIS EYES to find Iason staring at him.

“What are you doing?” he demanded, his voice thick with sleep.

Iason kissed him on the cheek. “Watching you sleep.”

“Like that’s exciting or something. What are you doing that for,” he yawned.

“You make...little sounds. And your lip twitches.”

“Yeah? Well,” Riki struggled to think of something negative to say about Iason, who looked absolutely beautiful when he slept, and failing to think of anything, countered dishonestly, “your face contorts in all sorts of alarming ways when you sleep.”

“Is that so?” Iason smiled.

“Yeah. And you make loud, really bizarre noises.”

“I see.”

The mongrel started to stretch and then groaned, wincing. “Fuck. I can’t move.”

“You deserved it.”

Riki snorted. “Yeah well...I’d like to take the strap to *you* just once. You’d be in bed for a week.”

“My. And what other agenda of discipline do you have worked out for me?”

“I’d tie you up and whip you with a C-19 kasey,” he answered. “And then...no, wait! First I’d spank you with that round paddle from Omaki’s box. I’d turn you over my knee and spank you like the bad Blondie you are. I wouldn’t stop until your ass was red and starting to welt.”

“And after that?” the Blondie pulled him close, and Riki rested his head on his chest, smiling.

“After that,” Riki continued, now getting a little excited, “after that I’d put you in the T-stand and give you a good taming. And then I’d make *you* piss in a jar.” Pleased with this thought, Riki closed his eyes, wishing that he truly could have just one night to punish Iason thoroughly. “And then I’d fuck you raw.”

Now Riki began fantasizing about a way he could accomplish such a thing. Perhaps he could tie him up while he was sleeping and then have his way with him. Of course, he would be severely punished afterwards...but it would almost be worth it.

Iason laughed. “I suppose, then, I should be thankful I’m not your pet.”

“Damn right. I’d punish you every day.”

“But, Riki, if I *were* your pet, I would obey you without question, so there would be no need for punishment.”

“I wouldn’t need a reason to discipline you,” the mongrel answered saucily. “As your Master it would be my prerogative. Isn’t that what you always say?”

“Ah. I suppose you are right.” Iason gazed at him for a moment. “I missed you this week, Riki.” The Blondie took hold of his chin and then moved as if to kiss him.

"I haven't brushed my teeth yet," Riki objected, moving away.

"I don't care, pet."

"Yeah but...you're all clean and fresh and I'm all...fucked up from sleeping," the mongrel protested.

"I said I didn't care."

"Let me go freshen up first!"

"I want to kiss you, and I want to kiss you *now*. Don't fight me. I'll have my kiss."

"No!" Riki pushed against his chest, attempting to wriggle free.

"Stop fighting me!"

The mongrel giggled, turning his face away. Iason took the opportunity to bite his neck, eliciting a squeal from his pet. Riki continued to avoid his kiss, tossing his head from side to side.

Iason finally got fed up and repositioned himself, pinning his pet's arms to the bed, lying on top of him and forcing the matter. At last unable to repel his advances, Riki submitted to the kiss.

"All right. Get off me now," Riki said, rather unromantically.

Iason laughed, rolling off onto his side.

"Hey! Watch this!" Riki reached over and pressed the coffee button, grinning.

Amused with his pet's obvious delight over the coffeebot, Iason opted not to inform him that he was quite familiar with this particular hotel amenity. When the bot came rolling up to the bed and its top slid open, Riki smiled, pointing to the two mugs. Then he frowned, staring at one of the mugs in disbelief. It was gold-plated.

"How the hell," he picked it up, puzzling over it. "I'm assuming the really cool one is for *you*, but how did he know you were here? That's just...*creepy*."

The Blondie couldn't help laughing over Riki's bewilderment. "It's programmed to receive information from the door sensors, pet. It knows an Elite is here because the door opened for my signature, and it just assumes you are still here from the hotel room logs."

"Oh." Riki felt a little foolish for not figuring this out himself. He poured himself some coffee and then lit up, preparing to enjoy his morning smoke.

"I wish you would stop smoking, pet," Iason sighed.

Riki rolled his eyes. "Fucking give me a break."

"You smoke far too much. And I recall that you promised to voluntarily cut back, though I don't see any difference in your smoking behavior."

"What? This is the first bloody smoke I've had today!"

"Give me the pack."

"What!"

Iason held out his hand. "I'm confiscating them. You're going to be allowed six cigarettes a day from now on."

"Six! No way!" Riki put his smokes behind his back, defiantly.

"Riki." Iason's voice was a little harsher. "Give them to me, *now*. I won't hesitate to punish you again, if necessary."

Sighing loudly, the mongrel slammed the pack into his Master's waiting hand. "This is fucked up," he muttered, frowning.

Iason made his opinion of Riki's behavior clear with a warning look. "Watch yourself, pet."

"You can hardly expect me to be happy about having one of my *few* freedoms taken away from me," the mongrel retorted.

"Be that as it may, you're walking a fine line, Riki."

"Hmmm." The mongrel pouted, looking away.

"I'm only doing this because you appear to be unable to reduce your intake on your own," Iason explained, a little more gently. "And I'm concerned about your health."

Riki sighed again, refusing to answer. He took a deliberately deep drag, which backfired when he began coughing uncontrollably.

"That's just what I'm talking about," the Blondie scolded. "These aren't good for you."

"Come on, Iason. I've been smoking since I was eleven."

"All the more reason you need to start cutting back now."

"Please. Let me have ten a day. I can't make it on just six."

"No, pet."

"But—"

"Riki, the discussion is over," the Blondie interrupted, the warning tone of his voice finally silencing his unhappy pet.

Frustrated, the mongrel sulked, but Iason was firm in his decision, ignoring Riki's obvious ploy to change his mind.



“Well,” Riki announced, putting out his smoke at the last possible moment, just when it was about to burn his fingers, “I’m taking a shower, then.”

His Master watched him leave, a slight smile tugging at his lips. He finished his coffee and then followed him, sliding the shower door open quietly.

Riki didn’t hear him enter because of the noise of the shower and jumped when he saw the Blondie standing there.

“Holy shit! Dammit, Iason! You fucking scared the crap out of me! You’re always doing that!”

The Blondie gazed at him. The mongrel’s dark, taut skin was dripping wet, the water accentuating every hollow and ripple of his muscles. He shuddered. “Pet,” he whispered.

“Oh fuck. Not again,” Riki groaned.

Iason seized his wrists and pinned them above his head, against the wet shower tile. Then he began kissing and nuzzling his neck, making little moans and gasps and growing increasingly passionate.

“You kinda sound like an animal,” Riki remarked. “The way you snort when you’re excited. Ah! That tickles!”

“Pet. I must have you.”

“Let me suck you off,” the mongrel pleaded. “My ass is so sore. I mean, it was great and everything last night, but hell, I need a break. I can’t believe you can fuck that many times and still get a hard-on.”

Iason considered him for a moment and then released his wrists. “Very well. Get on your knees.”

Riki obeyed, kneeling and gazing up at him provocatively, water streaming down his body. Iason washed himself first and then fondled himself for a moment. “I’m very aroused,” he announced, shivering at the sight of his pet kneeling before him.

The mongrel smiled. “Yeah, I can see that.”

Iason held his cock in one hand and put the other hand behind Riki’s head, thrusting his pelvis forward to bump up suggestively against his mouth.

“Oh, pet. Open for me, love.”

Keeping eye contact with him, Riki proceeded to swirl his tongue around the tip of the Blondie’s formidable erection.

Drawing in his breath sharply, Iason watched him, delighted. His pet was making a special effort to be seductive, which he loved. "Good boy," he whispered. "Just like that. Now...I'm going to climax quickly. And I want to pull out, just before, and press myself up to your lips. I want to see you drink me. Understand?"

Riki nodded, continuing to pleasure him.

After a few minutes of this, Iason held his head with both hands, thrusting eagerly into the mongrel's mouth. "Take me in completely," he commanded. The Blondie widened his stance and pushed his pelvis forward, his buttocks clenching.

Riki admitted him fully, sucking slowly and wiggling his tongue back and forth as he withdrew.

"Perfect! Oh, Riki, Riki!"

The mongrel took him in again, his lingual arts finally pushing his Master to the brink.

"Oh, pet!" Iason pulled out, holding his cock up to Riki's lips. "Drink me, my love." The Blondie released, watching his semen pump out of his organ onto his pet's lips and down his chin. Riki gazed up at him as he drank him.

"Just so," he gasped. "Just like that. Oh, love." The Blondie then closed his eyes, relishing his rapture.

Finally, he looked down again.

Riki was staring up at him, an impish smile on his face. "You're pretty damn sexy when you come," he whispered.

"Would you like me to pleasure you, pet?"

"Later. I'm kinda dried up for now." Riki stood up. "As much as I love sex, I have my limits. We fucked like...what...four times last night? Anyway, I don't want to waste a smoke this early in the day since I only have six."

"Five," Iason corrected. "You already smoked one."

"Oh, come on," Riki pleaded. "How about the first day you let me have seven?"

"No, pet."

"Fuck," the mongrel muttered, sulking. "And I just gave you a really nice blow job too. You sure know how to ruin a moment." He began soaping himself angrily, refusing to even look at his Master.

The Blondie tolerated his pouting for a few minutes but disliked it when Riki wouldn't talk or look at him. "So...that was the infamous Bison gang, then?" he asked, attempting to elicit a response from the brooding mongrel.

Riki then looked even more glum. "Yeah."

"And the one with his arm around you. That was Guy?"

"Uh huh."

Iason felt a small stab of jealousy. "Was he everything you imagined he would be, Riki?" he asked softly.

Riki shot him a dark look. "You bloody well know the answer to that. He—they all—rejected me when they found out I was your pet."

The Blondie was quiet for a moment, thinking back to the evening before when he had gone to fetch Riki from Depravities. He had been so angry that he hadn't paid much attention to what had gone on there between his pet and the others. Now he remembered how Guy had called after Riki never to come back again.

"They did not treat you well," he remarked thoughtfully.

"No shit, Inspector Mink." Riki shook his head. "I can't believe I fucking gave him my bike. It would have been better to just throw it into the ocean than to let *him* have it, that bloody bastard."

"And the one who asked me if I would punish you, who was he?"

The mongrel scowled. "That was Kei, a fucking little shithead trying to take over Katze's market. Hand me that shampoo."

This last detail interested Iason. "Is that so?" he murmured, raising an eyebrow as he handed his pet the shampoo bottle.

"Yeah. Apparently he thinks because Katze hasn't been around lately that he can just take over." He sighed. "Those assholes."

"You weren't expecting them to treat you so?"

"Nah, I knew they'd reject me once they knew I was a pet. I'm still mad, though. I don't know. I guess part of me hoped...maybe it *wouldn't* end that way."

Iason blinked, confused. "Then why did you want to spend a week with them if you knew they wouldn't accept you for what you are?"

Riki grew thoughtful, looking a little sad. "I guess...because I wanted to pretend things were still the way they once were, when I was their leader."

“I see.”

“But nothing’s the same. I mean...I’m not the same.”

Iason began helping Riki wash his hair, which the mongrel allowed, sighing. He loved it when his Master washed his hair; the feel of his fingers massaging his scalp was heavenly.

“No?”

Riki shook his head as he rinsed his hair. “I realized that this week. I don’t belong in Ceres anymore.”

“And,” Iason whispered, after a long moment, “where *do* you belong, Riki?”

The mongrel gazed at him solemnly. “I belong with you.”

Pleased with this answer, the Blondie pulled him close, kissing the top of his head. “Riki,” he breathed. “I love that you said that.”

“Yeah well. Don’t get all mushy over it. Shit.”

Smiling, Iason pulled away. “You say you’ve changed, and yet you seem very much the same to me.”

“Whatever. But I’ll tell you one thing. I sure as hell wish I could get some payback.”

“You mean with Bison?”

“Uh huh. Fucking pricks.”

“And what would you do?”

“I don’t know...just fuck them up a bit. I’d beat the shit out of Guy, for one.”

“Ah. Blood vengeance.”

“Damn right. That’s exactly it. Blood fucking vengeance.”

“So I suppose if I allowed you to go back to Depravities to settle your score, you’d be pleased?”

Riki stared at Iason, eyes wide. “Seriously?”

The Blondie laughed softly. “I’d like to watch my little wolf go after a few puppies.”

Privately Iason was quite anxious to see Guy take a few hits from Riki. He knew it was foolish to be jealous of a mongrel, but he couldn’t help himself. He hated the thought of his pet in bed with Guy and was looking forward to watching him suffer.

Riki turned the water off, excited. “Fuck yeah! Let’s go!”



RIKI WAS BESIDE HIMSELF with excitement the entire drive to Depravities, repeatedly slamming his fist into his palm. “This is gonna be awesome,” he asserted. “You’re so bloody cool, Iason.”

The Blondie smiled at his pet’s compliment. “I see. So now you approve of me, then? Does that mean you’re going to obey me from now on, Riki?”

The mongrel snorted at this. “That depends on what you try to make me do.”

“For instance,” Iason continued, ignoring Riki’s sarcastic reply, “are you going to obey my smoking mandate, or will I be forced to discipline you for smuggling in contraband substances?” He smiled at the transparent surprise that crept onto his pet’s face. “Or perhaps you thought I wouldn’t enforce that directive?”

Riki rolled his eyes, although he felt rather annoyed that Iason had already guessed his intentions.

“Because if you disobey me, Riki, I *will* punish you. And I’ll tell you exactly what I have in mind. A paddling. Over my knee with a hand paddle. Exactly the way a naughty pet like you *should* be punished.” The Blondie reached down to adjust himself, feeling a surge of arousal just thinking about it.

The movement was not lost on his pet, who shook his head at Iason’s perversions. “Thanks for ruining the moment yet again,” he muttered, staring out the window and sinking down a bit in his seat.

Iason suppressed a laugh at Riki’s pout. “We’re almost there. Now, Riki, don’t take this too far. I want everyone breathing when we leave.”

“Don’t worry. I don’t plan on killing anyone. I just wanna make them suffer.” Now he regarded Iason curiously. “Although why should you care if I send them to their graves? I thought mongrels were nothing to you Elites.”

“That’s not entirely true. I can think of *one* mongrel who means something to me.” Iason gifted him with a deliberately provocative gaze, batting his eyes seductively.

Riki grinned, adjusting himself when he felt his cock twitch in response to Iason's coquetry. "You're a big flirt. But you didn't answer my question."

"I have my reasons," the Blondie answered. Then, when Riki continued to study him, he added, "It is no small thing to take a life, even that of a mongrel."

"Is that why you saved me, that day we first met?" Riki asked.

"Perhaps."

"Perhaps? Why exactly *did* you save me?"

"I don't know, pet." Iason turned to look at him, his eyes shining, as he brought the vehicle to a stop in front of Depravities.

Riki turned his attention to the scene in front of the club, where Guy was standing next to his new bike—Riki's bike—surrounded by Sid, Noris, and Luke.

"Damn," Riki cursed, as the vehicle rolled to a stop. "Kei's not here. Shit."

"Leave that one to Katze," Iason advised. "Four against one—those are tough enough odds."

"I'm not worried," the mongrel retorted cockily. "I'll be the only one left standing."

The Blondie laughed softly at his pet's confidence. Riki suddenly leaned over and kissed his cheek. "Thanks for this," he whispered.

The mongrel then got out of the car and sauntered toward his old gang, hands in his pockets.

"What do you know. It's Sir Riki," Noris announced, his voice thick with contempt.

"Did you come back to buy us more drinks?" Sid asked, and the others all laughed, except Guy.

"Where's that pretty Master of yours?" Luke taunted and then nodded toward Iason's vehicle. "I suppose he's sitting in that fancy hybrid there, watching you."

Riki ignored these comments, locking eyes with Guy, who glared back at him angrily.

"You've got a lot of fucking nerve coming back here," Guy said, his voice dark and low. "Even if you came back on your knees begging, we wouldn't accept you."

"Is that so?" the mongrel replied calmly. "Hmmm. Because I'm pretty sure that by the time I leave, you'll be on *your* knees, begging for mercy."

Guy scoffed at this. "What, you think you can take on all of us?"

Riki answered this with a hard punch to his face that sent him sprawling backwards, knocking over his bike. "I know I can," he answered, grinning. He spun around, landing a second punch square into Sid's jaw.

Noris and Luke both lunged for him, but Riki stopped Luke with a hard kick to his groin. The youth fell to his knees, silent for a long moment before he began screaming in agony, his part in the fight decidedly at an abrupt end. Then Noris swung at him, but Riki evaded him, delivering a brutal punch to his stomach. Noris bent over, eyes bulging, unable to catch his breath.

Guy managed to stagger back to his feet, taking a swing at Riki, but the mongrel easily dodged him, laughing, and then punched him again in the face and pushed him to the ground. He straddled him, pounding him mercilessly.

Sid scrambled to his feet and started toward him again, but Riki sensed his approach and quickly turned, slamming his elbow into the youth's face. Sid screamed, holding his nose as blood gushed over his mouth and down his chin.

A small crowd of onlookers had gathered, but no one made any move to intervene. They saw that the odds were against Riki, but it would have been against Ceres street code to interfere. Many of them had been there the previous day when Iason Mink escorted Riki from the club in chains, definitively answering rumors that were circulating regarding the mongrel since his disappearance over two years before.

They had witnessed the taunts from his old gang, Bison, and so to now see him come back to exact blood vengeance inspired their admiration and respect. Unlike the members of Bison, many there envied Riki his status as the pet of the Head of the Syndicate and felt no contempt for him whatsoever.

"So...you'd accept me, no matter what, huh, Guy?" Riki hissed. "You worthless prick. The sex sucked, by the way."

Guy was too disoriented to reply and was fading in and out of consciousness, groaning.

Riki's eyes gravitated to his bike key, which had fallen to the ground during the skirmish. Scooping it up, a naughty smile curled his lips as he flipped Guy onto his stomach and yanked down his pants. The sight of fresh switch marks on his ass elicited a laugh from the mongrel. "It looks like *your* Master wasn't too happy with you last night either," he taunted. Then he leaned closer. "Are you enjoying my bike, Guy?"

With that, the mongrel pressed his keys past his old lover's portal, shoving them as far up his ass as he could. Guy cried out as the keys tore his flesh.

"I put your keys in a special place, Guy. You might need a little help retrieving them. Now every time you start up my bike, you'll think of me."

Riki leapt to his feet, gifting him with a final kick. "Bastard!"

Noris, who had finally regained his breath, stumbled forward in a rather pathetic attempt to tackle him, but the mongrel put an end to this new assault by knocking him unconscious with one fell punch.

The onlookers cheered and Riki smiled, saluting the crowd as he stepped over the bodies and made his way back to the vehicle.

Iason watched the entire fight, his heart pounding. At first, he was a little worried about his pet. But after only a few moments, he relaxed, enjoying the performance as Riki unleashed his vengeance like a wild animal, beautiful and perfect in his fury. It was almost like a dance, the dark mongrel moving with such grace and precision, so forceful and powerful. Riki spun around, kicking one opponent and then easily evading every counterattack as though by some battle magic. He moved so quickly that it was difficult to even see his art, but the groans, and the blood, and the bodies lying on the ground were evidence of his handiwork.

As the Blondie watched, he became incredibly aroused, despite having released but an hour before. The mongrel was so enticing to him that he could not resist unfastening his trousers and fondling himself as he watched. He lowered the window a bit to get a better view, enjoying the flexing of his pet's muscles, his uncompromising



focus and his dark, menacing glare. He was not sure what to think when Riki exposed Guy, and for a moment he feared that his pet planned to take the mongrel, an act that the Blondie would have felt compelled to interrupt. But Riki suddenly rose and kicked the whimpering youth, and then walked away.

Watching his pet hurt and humiliate Guy gave Iason immense satisfaction. He was admittedly jealous of Riki's old pairing partner and deeply resented the week he had spent with him, no doubt engaging in all sorts of sexual escapades. The Blondie was glad to see him suffer, especially as it came from Riki's own hand. Iason desperately hoped that this would end whatever attachments his pet still had for his old lover.

As Riki approached the vehicle, he fumbled to fasten his trousers, feeling somehow inclined to hide his arousal from his pet.

The mongrel slid into the vehicle, gifting him with a saucy smile and looking rather proud of himself.

"Your hand," Iason exclaimed, concerned.

"It's not my blood," his pet replied, a little smugly.

His eyes were immediately drawn to Iason's groin, for the Blondie's erection was far too immense to hide.

"You pervert," he whispered, his eyes shining as a smile tugged at his lips.

Iason answered that with a seductive look, spreading his legs a bit as if to acknowledge his arousal. Riki suddenly reached over, grabbed the back of his head and kissed him, his tongue swirling deep inside the Blondie's willing mouth as he rested his hand suggestively on his thigh.

"Let's fuck when we get back," he suggested, pulling away.

Iason needed no persuading, immediately putting the car into D6 and peeling away at head-turning velocity.



KAHLAN DREAMT OF PEACEFUL things, of warm homes and good food, of kind strangers and soft, comfortable beds. He woke with a start to

find a small, wide-eyed boy peering down at him, his shoulder-length hair tousled wildly about his face.

“Who are you?” Aki asked excitedly.

“Kahlan,” he answered. “And...you are?”

“Aki,” the boy answered proudly. “I’m eight.”

“That’s...good.” Kahlan yawned.

“How old are you?” Aki demanded.

“Seventeen.”

“Why are you sleeping here?”

“Because...Lord Ghan invited me to.”

“Why aren’t you sleeping in your own bed?”

“Well,” Kahlan sat up, searching for his smokes, “I don’t really have a bed.”

Aki looked dubious at this assertion. “Then where do you sleep?”

“Wherever I can. Usually on the ship I’m working.”

At this, the boy brightened, jumping up onto the bed. “You work on ships? What do you do?”

“I’m a messenger.”

“Where’s your Master?”

“Don’t have one.”

Aki’s brow furrowed. “Then who takes care of you?”

“I take care of myself.”

The boy fell momentarily silent at this, awed by the very idea of such self-sufficiency. He leaned forward to peer at Kahlan’s eyes. “Blue! You have pretty eyes,” he announced.

Kahlan smiled. “So do you.”

“I do?” At this, he straightened up, looking at Kahlan in a way that suggested his hope for more compliments.

“Yeah...they’re almost gold-colored. They look nice...with your brown hair.”

Aki beamed at this praise, bouncing on the bed in his excitement. “So have you been to lots of planets?”

“I suppose.”

“Which ones?”

“Let’s see...well, Aristia, of course, since that’s my home planet, Xeron, Alpha Zen—”

At the mention of Alpha Zen, Aki suddenly stood up on the bed. "Did you see Commander Khosi?" he yelled.

Kahlan laughed. "No. But it's pretty interesting there now, I hear, especially in the capital city."

Aki was beside himself with excitement. "You've been to Ultanum? What's it like?"

"It's very interesting. But...it's too damn cold for my taste."

"Oh," Aki replied, the realization that Alpha Zen was a cold planet dashing all his hopes to relocate there.

"But then, I'm used to beautiful, warm weather."

"Is that what it's like on Aristia?" Aki sat back down, moving a little closer.

"Yeah. It's perfect."

"Then why did you leave?"

Kahlan suddenly looked a little sad, turning away. "Because there was nothing for me there."

Aki, sensing his sadness, was quiet for a moment. "Did something bad happen?" he asked finally, in a low voice.

"Aki," Omaki scolded.

The Blondie was standing in the doorway, hand on one hip.

"What are you doing? You know better than to barge into a guestroom like that."

"It's okay," Kahlan said.

"He knows better," Lord Ghan replied. "Come here, Aki."

Reluctantly, Aki climbed off the bed and slowly walked toward his Master, head down.

When he was within reach, Omaki grabbed his arm and proffered a few hard spanks to his behind, just enough to produce an equivalent number of yelps.

"That's just a warning, Aki. Now, you're not to bother guests, and you must never enter their rooms."

Aki pouted at this, rubbing his bottom.

"You're off to a shaky start this morning. Behave yourself today or you'll end up over my knee for a real spanking. You won't like it if I have to spank you again, Aki. Understood?"

"Yeah," Aki said softly.

"Now, have you brushed your teeth?"

Aki nodded.

"Then you may go and play. Stay out of trouble."

"Yes, Master," Aki said meekly, and then ran off to begin his morning adventures.

"I apologize if he bothered you."

Kahlan shook his head. "He's a nice kid."

Omaki smiled. "Kahlan, I have a proposition for you."

The youth looked a little surprised and then a bit alarmed, his eyes widening. He considered the Blondie, dressed so provocatively in black leather, a small whip hanging threateningly from his belt, and wondered what Lord Ghan would demand from him. He shivered, worried.

The Blondie laughed. "Not *that* kind of proposition, my dear boy. May I come in?"

"Of course."

Omaki entered, sitting down on the edge of the bed and crossing his legs. "How would you like a position here at the Taming Tower?"

Kahlan was so shocked at the offer that he was unable to reply.

"You'd have free room and board. I'd pay you 8000 credits a week. Your duties would vary; there are many details to attend to here, what with the operation of the brothel as well as all the suites. I could really use some help just now, with the Alpha Zen Trade Convention coming up. Do you know how to use a computer?"

"No," Kahlan answered, a little ashamed.

"No matter. I can teach you easily enough. Can you drive?"

At this, the youth straightened. "Yes."

"Excellent. I'd probably have you run quite a few errands. So, what do you think?"

Kahlan was speechless. It was an amazing offer—the pay far exceeding what he was currently earning, plus room and board...and he would be working for the kind Blondie who had taken him in.

"I see. Perhaps you would like to think about it?" Lord Ghan said, mistaking his silence for disinterest.

"No! I mean, I would be most...that is...yes, I accept," Kahlan stammered. "It would be an honor."

Omaki smiled. "Good. You can stay with me here the next few days until I get your room set up. Now, I guess I should warn you, we have all sorts of traffic here, and you'll have to watch your back. I'm sure you'll be noticed, with your good looks and such. I'll arm you, of course, and once the regulars know you work for me, you won't need to worry about them."

The Aristian smiled mysteriously, an air of confidence creeping into his manner. "I can take care of myself."

The Blondie nodded, feeling almost envious of the free-spirited, street-smart youth. "I'm sure you can. Are you hungry? Breakfast is waiting for you."

"Yes," Kahlan admitted. Although he had eaten his fill the night before, he was now famished again. "Lord Ghan, is there somewhere I can smoke?"

The Blondie considered him for a moment. "You're a bit young to be smoking already," he commented, and then caught himself. "But, of course, that is your own business. You can smoke out on the balcony. It's just off the breakfast nook. I'll show you."

As Kahlan followed Lord Ghan to the balcony, he felt a strong sense of longing; he liked this Blondie and wished that he could stay with him in the warm, comfortable dwelling forever.

Pushing such thoughts out of his mind, he focused on Omaki's offer, excited that he would no longer be forced to take horrendous, low-paying messenger work where he was subjected to all sorts of abuse at the hands of unsavory shipmates. Though he had managed to avoid outright rape, despite a few very narrow escapes, Kahlan had been roughed up enough to dread the long space voyages, when he was invariably targeted because of his youth and good looks.

Kahlan did not fully appreciate the effect his appearance had on others. His fair skin—unusual for an Aristian—and dark hair gave him the look of an aristocrat, for the Merovian royals of his home planet all shared the same stunning good looks. His eyes, a calming shade of greenish-blue, seemed exactly the color of the Aristian sea.

The boy's slender build made him seem younger than his actual years, encouraging even more interest from sex-hungry predators. He had been forced, on two occasions, to pleasure his shipmates—

both times rutting Xeronians who cornered him before being restrained by the rest of the crew. Too young to appreciate these encounters, Kahlan had been completely repulsed and was now quite reluctant to share quarters with Xeronians. This Enyu—Lord Ghan’s pet—had him a bit worried, although at present he seemed to be no threat; he was even friendly, or so it seemed to the affection-starved youth.

Omaki turned back to smile at him. “You can take today off. Go explore the city if you like. There’s plenty to see.”

Kahlan beamed, almost bursting with excitement. After a good meal and a long night of sleep in the most comfortable bed he’d ever encountered, a day of exploring Midas—the infamous Pleasure City of Amoi—was an extremely attractive prospect to the inquisitive youth. He enjoyed a long smoke and a very big breakfast and then set out, feeling the happiest he’d felt in a very long while...certainly since the terrible day, nearly two years before, when his world had been turned upside down.

Lord Ghan was pleased to see him looking so happy and was glad Kahlan had accepted his offer. Already the Blondie felt an urge to watch over him. He was convinced Kahlan was orphaned, for he could think of no other reason why someone so young would leave Aristia—an absolute paradise—to work as a messenger, a dangerous occupation that only offered miserable wages. The fact that he had done so proved Kahlan was willing to do just about anything to avoid working in a brothel, an option that would have been readily available to him on Aristia and would have provided him with a fairly comfortable lifestyle. For this reason, Omaki chose not to offer him a position in the Taming Tower brothel. But he was not giving him work out of charity; the Blondie could truly use a young, energetic boy like Kahlan to help him out.

Lord Ghan was sitting at his desk, pondering this matter as well as the troubling correspondence from Yousi, when he received a call from the brothel informing him that Aki was loitering in the foyer there, a place that was specifically off-limits to the boy.

“Don’t tell him you called me,” the Blondie replied curtly. “But don’t let him inside. Keep an eye on him for me.”

“Yes, Sir.”

Omaki cut the transmission, furious. He had made it perfectly clear to Aki on numerous occasions that he was forbidden to go near the brothel. In fact, he was not even allowed to be *on* the sixth floor. Aki’s disobedience infuriated him, because the brothel was dangerous; with many foreigners frequenting its suites, it would be easy enough for a pretty young face like Aki’s to draw the interest of a client who could then lure him into one of the rooms there.

He waited impatiently for Aki to return, fuming. When at last the boy came running inside, he managed to rein in his anger enough to address him calmly.

“Aki,” he said softly, but firmly. “Come here.”

The boy stopped, looking at him in wide-eyed surprise. He knew immediately from his Master’s expression that something was up. Guilt began to increase the pounding of his heart; what if his Master had discovered he had been playing near the brothel? He walked toward the Blondie slowly.

“Aki, were you on the sixth floor today?” the Blondie asked, looking directly in his eyes.

“No,” Aki replied, fidgeting a little.

The lie only served to increase the Blondie’s anger. “Aki, I already know you were at the brothel. And now we both know you’ve just lied to me.”

With that, the boy began to cry.

“I see. You’re smart enough to cry, knowing what’s coming, but you’re not smart enough to stay away from the brothel, which I SPECIFICALLY TOLD YOU WAS OFF-LIMITS?” Omaki’s voice rose, betraying his anger.

Now Aki began chewing on his finger as he wailed, terrified. It was unusual for his Master to be so angry, and he was horrified, knowing that certain punishment was imminent.

“Why did you disobey me, Aki?” the Blondie demanded.

“I don’t know,” came the pathetic, tearful reply.

“You’re really in for it, Aki,” Omaki warned, grabbing hold of him and pulling him up onto his lap, and then turning him over his knee. “I’m going to teach you to obey me, naughty boy.”

With that, the Blondie proceeded to tug down his pants.

“No,” Aki pleaded, reaching back to cover his exposed flesh with his hands. “I won’t do it again! I won’t!”

“It’s too late for that now, Aki. You’ve disobeyed me and now you’re going to be punished.” Omaki took his hands and pinned them behind his back with one hand.

“No!”

Omaki leaned down, as he rested his hand threateningly on the boy’s bottom. “Yes, Aki. You’re about to get the spanking of your life. And this should teach you to STAY AWAY FROM THE BROTHEL!”

At this, Aki began struggling and kicking in a futile attempt to wriggle free from his Master’s grasp.

“Stop fighting me, Aki,” Lord Ghan scolded. “You’re only making things worse for yourself.”

“I hate you!” Aki shouted. “You’re mean!”

Stung by these words, although he knew the boy did not truly mean them, Omaki repositioned Aki on his knee for the best angle before replying. “This is what happens,” he replied, “to naughty little boys who don’t mind their Masters.”

The Blondie then proceeded with a spanking that he hoped the boy would never forget, much to Aki’s complete despair. The boy wailed his misery and anguish, struggling and kicking all the while. Omaki was so angry that he was completely unmoved by Aki’s cries; he focused his attention on making sure the boy’s punishment was so severe that he would never even think of setting foot on the sixth floor again.

“Are you learning anything from this, Aki?” he asked, as he continued to administer his firm punishment.

The boy was unable to answer, wailing hysterically.

“You will NEVER disobey me again, naughty boy! Or this is what will happen.”

At last, Omaki brought the spanking to an end, allowing the boy to sob on his knees for a few moments as he let his hand rest on his hot, soundly disciplined flesh.

Now that the punishment was administered, the Blondie became aware of his arousal. The sight of the boy’s reddened bottom



positioned so invitingly over his knee and the warmth of his skin under his hand was too much. Perhaps a little roughly, he tugged Aki's pants up and set him on the ground.

"Go to your room," he said sternly, proffering one final spank to the boy's bottom.

Aki ran from the room in tears as he held his sore behind, wailing his misery.

The Blondie then quickly unfastened his trousers, releasing himself with a groan. "Enyu!" he called out, almost impatiently. The Xeronian was immediately before him, ready to assist.

Lord Ghan, still angry and rather worked up, seized him and pulled him onto his lap. "Straddle me," he commanded in Xeronian.

Enyu obeyed, lifting his robes as he positioned himself on the Blondie's lap. The Blondie, unable to wait, reached under his robes and took hold of Enyu's hips, forcing him down onto his erection. "Oh yes," he moaned.

The Xeronian whimpered from the penetration but remained submissively positioned.

Omaki closed his eyes, shuddering. "I'm sorry, my pet," he murmured, as he began lifting and lowering Enyu rather violently. "Ohhhh."

The Xeronian, though initially rather overcome with pain, eventually began to loosen up and enjoy the experience.

"Kiss me," the Blondie demanded, opening his eyes.

Enyu did so, and his Master continued to manage the cadence of their fuck while they kissed. Digging his nails into his flesh, Omaki announced his ascent, suddenly breaking away from their kiss.

"You're gripping me exquisitely, my Enyu," he gasped and then began moaning rather loudly. "Oh yes. I'm releasing now." With that, the Blondie climaxed, groaning his pleasure.

Enyu smiled, enjoying the expression on his Master's face. He reached under his robe to fondle himself, feeling rather uncomfortably aroused.

As Lord Ghan became aware of his activities, he seized his hand. "Let me pleasure you," he whispered.

"Yes, Master," Enyu agreed happily.

"I know I was a bit rough just now. Let me...make it up to you. Would you like to take me?"

Astonished, Enyu simply stared back at him, unable to believe his ears. His Master was offering himself?

Omaki laughed softly. "Why so surprised? I'm partial to a good ramming every now and then. Or are you not interested?"

"Oh!" Enyu exclaimed. "Yes! I mean...yes, Master. I would...love that. You are too good to me!"

"Then get up. Let's go to the bedroom."

Enyu needed no further prodding; he scrambled off Lord Ghan's lap and followed him, excited, to the Master bedroom. His eyes were drawn to the Blondie's tantalizing ass and narrow waist, his skin-tight leather ensemble advertising his decidedly sexy body. He had been lusting after his Master all morning, and to now be following him into the bedroom, knowing he was being given the opportunity to take him, made his organ twitch with unbearable readiness.

Omaki was already undressing, and by the time Enyu reached the room, the Blondie had his legs spread and was bent over the bed, presenting his firm, delightfully curved bare ass.

The Xeronian was so excited he almost ejaculated on the spot. He fumbled with the belt on his robe and let his garment fall to the floor, quickly positioning himself behind his Master, as though afraid the Blondie would suddenly retract his offer. He pushed himself up to Omaki's portal, hands on his hips, and then hesitated.

Lord Ghan looked back at him, eyes shining intoxicatingly. "Go ahead, my pretty pet."

Shivering, Enyu proceeded, slowly sinking into the Blondie's depths. "Ohhh...Master," he purred, closing his eyes. He explored his Master a little tentatively, hardly daring to believe he was actually inside the Blondie.

"Fuck me harder," Omaki encouraged, with a wicked little smile.

Enyu widened his stance and proceeded to obey this mandate, taking the Blondie aggressively. Not since his days in Hiroshi's palace had he been given the opportunity to enjoy such pleasure, and certainly not with a Master, nor anyone nearly so attractive as Lord Ghan.

He gasped as he felt the Blondie tightening, squeezing him rhythmically and quickly—almost vibrating against him.

“Master,” he exclaimed, excited. “Oh! I like that!” He began moaning, biting his lip.

Lord Ghan smiled, pleased with his pet’s reaction to his physiology. He knew perfectly well what Enyu referred to, having enjoyed a few Blondies himself in his impetuous youth, including Megala Chi and Sanyara Zeax. He’d also set his sites on the infamous Academy lovers Iason and Raoul but never managed to seduce either.

The closest he’d come to taking Iason was the afternoon he and Yousi passed with the then young Mink, the three Blondies enjoying a female captive from Aristia. Omaki had been more excited by the sight of Iason’s body than by the uncooperative girl, who was, nevertheless, a delightful acquisition, one that Iason had been first to enjoy as Omaki and Yousi held her down.

At any rate, Omaki knew what a Blondie felt like during coitus. It was one of the things that puzzled him most about Jupiter’s prohibitions, for why should Jupiter forbid her Blondies to engage in pleasures for which their bodies were obviously designed?

Enyu, although no longer rutting, was so aroused he reverted to his interval persona, almost growling as he took the lovely Blondie. “Yes,” he hissed, his nails digging into Omaki’s hips as he thrust into him with aggressive strokes. “Keep squeezing me...just like that.”

“Do you like this position? Or shall we try something else?”

At this, Enyu suddenly withdrew. “Lie on the bed, face down.”

Smiling at his pet’s command, Omaki obeyed. As soon as he was positioned on the bed, the Xeronian entered him again, enjoying the feeling of power over the Blondie as he penetrated him from behind. He reached under his Master’s chest and grabbed hold of his shoulders as he took him. Nuzzling Omaki’s neck, he began to purr.

“Oh my,” the Blondie breathed.

Enyu bit his neck, eliciting a gasp from his Master. “I like fucking you,” he asserted.

“Is that so?” Omaki gasped, thrilled by how hard his pet was taking him. “I must admit...I rather like being taken by you.”

Excited, Enyu grabbed onto the Blondie's hair and pulled his head back. "You looked so sexy today in that leather outfit. I've been watching you all morning."

"Ohhhh." Lord Ghan was delighted with his pet's domineering attitude, feeling a second erection beginning.

"With that little whip," Enyu continued, "hanging down from your belt, brushing against your thigh. Were you deliberately trying to taunt me?"

Omaki smiled. He wore the whip and dressed in hardcore, suggestive street clothing and jewelry simply to impress his clients, who were typically shocked to see an Elite so attired. But he was enjoying his pet's game.

"Yes," he answered.

"Hmmm." Enyu nibbled his earlobe. "Then...perhaps I should punish you?"

The Blondie's heart began to pound faster. "Yes," he replied, closing his eyes and swallowing. "I most definitely...*should* be punished. Yes, indeed."

"Then, I think I shall tie you up and give you a good strapping."

"You wouldn't dare."

"Oh wouldn't I?" Now Enyu was perilously close to his critical point and began to tremble.

"You're about to come, I think," his Master remarked, knowingly.

As if released by the Blondie's words, the Xeronian climaxed, shudders of pleasure coursing through his body. He collapsed onto his Master's back and then finally withdrew, rolling onto his back.

Lord Ghan turned onto his side, smiling. "So, you had an agenda of discipline worked out for me, my pet?"

The Xeronian blinked, his senses slowly returning to him. "I'm...sorry, Master," he stammered. "I was...I was...excited."

"That much was evident," Omaki whispered. "But don't be sorry. I assure you—I thoroughly enjoyed it. And in my view, I wouldn't have minded if things had gone...to the next level."

"Truly?" Enyu studied the Blondie, amazed.

"Oh yes. Let's just say...I have a taste for such things." He laughed. "Why do you suppose I built the Taming Tower?"

Enyu pondered this for a moment, savoring the thought of disciplining the Blondie.

Omaki was amused at his expression. "You and I are going to have some good times together, I believe."

"Yes, Master."

"Now...what would you say if next time I call *you* Master, and you discipline me, the way you threatened to just now?"

Enyu swallowed hard, unable to quite believe what the Blondie was suggesting. "As you wish," he answered finally.

"And," Omaki whispered, kissing his neck, "I want you to punish me *severely*. Don't hold back."

The Xeronian began to tremble, both nervous and excited about this proposal. "Are you sure, Master?"

Lord Ghan broke away, and gave his pet a hard smack on the bottom. "And perhaps sometime I'll have to discipline *you*."

Enyu, much less enthusiastic about this proposal, remained silent, though his expression clearly conveyed his opinion on the subject.

"I see." Omaki took hold of his chin. "You're not too keen on that idea, are you?"

"No," Enyu admitted.

The Blondie leaned down and gave him a soft kiss and then began nibbling on his neck. "Oh, but...that's what would make it absolutely delightful. Perhaps next time I'll turn you over my knee and give you a good, hard spanking before I ravish you. I'll make you plead for mercy. I'd like to hear you whimper a bit."

The Xeronian flinched a little at this threat, remembering all too well another spanking at the hand of a Blondie.

The talk of spankings reminded Lord Ghan of Aki's recent punishment, and he became aware of the boy's cries. He sighed, sitting up. "But for the moment, I have something I must attend to." He rose and began to dress. "I enjoyed that, pet. Did you?"

Enyu nodded happily. "Very much. It was perfect."

Omaki finished dressing and then made for Aki's room, pausing outside the door. His heart softened as he listened to the boy's pathetic whimpering and sobs within. He hesitated, not wanting to dilute the effect of the punishment quite yet. Turning, he went to

one of his closets, one that housed a variety of discipline instruments, and selected a good-sized, round hand paddle, one he was sure would get the boy's attention. Then he returned to Aki's room and opened the door.

Upon seeing his Master enter with a paddle in hand, the boy immediately sat up, shrieking.

"Calm down," Omaki scolded. "I've not come to discipline you."

Aki quieted, his eyes locked on the paddle.

"Yes. I've come to show you what's waiting for you, should you dare disobey me again and even set foot on the sixth floor," the Blondie said. He twirled the paddle in his hand. "I'll take this paddle to your little behind so hard you won't be able to sit down for a week. Understood?"

Aki nodded, eyes wide.

"I hope so. Because, Aki, I'm warning you—a good paddling is far worse than the spankings you've endured so far." To illustrate, he suddenly smacked the paddle against his own thigh, producing a loud, intimidating sound he knew would be frightening to the boy.

Aki flinched, backing up against the headboard of his bed.

"But I'm not going to need to do that, am I? You're going to mind me, isn't that right?"

Aki nodded. "Yes, Master," he whispered, his voice hoarse from crying. He sniffed, rubbing his eyes with the back of his hands.

"Good." Omaki sat down on the edge of the bed, putting the paddle aside. "Now. Come here, Aki," he said, gently.

Relieved, the boy crawled toward him, sighing when his Master took him onto his lap. He winced a little, his bottom still dreadfully sore, and then snuggled up close to the Blondie and closed his eyes.

"I had to punish you, Aki, because you disobeyed me and then you lied to me. It's very important that you mind me when I tell you not to do something. The brothel is a dangerous place. I don't want anything to happen to you. You're very precious to me."

Aki sighed again, feeling much better now that his Master held him close.

"I imagine your bottom is hurting, isn't it?"

"Yes," the boy admitted, his voice wavering a bit.

“So, I hope that will remind you to obey me?”

“Uh huh.”

“Good boy.” Lord Ghan fell silent, rocking the boy in his arms.

“Master,” Aki whispered.

“Yes, my love?”

“I...don’t *really* hate you,” the boy said tearfully.

Omaki smiled, hugging him closer. “I know you don’t.”

“Are you still mad at me?”

“No, pet. I am not mad.” He leaned down and kissed the top of his head. “In fact, would you like to go on a little trip with me? I need to visit Iason Mink.”

At this, the boy brightened, sitting up straight. “Can I feed the fish?” he asked, excited.

“We’ll have to ask Lord Mink, won’t we?”

“He’ll let me!”

“And what makes you think so?”

“Because...he’s nice,” the boy replied thoughtfully.

Lord Ghan was pleased to learn Aki’s perceptions of his potential Guardian. He smiled and kissed the boy again. “Then, if you want to come with me, go wash your face.”

“Okay,” Aki agreed, carefully climbing off his lap and then running to the bath hall.

The Blondie watched the boy longingly, feeling so much love for him that he thought he would burst.



JUTHIAN WAS AT THE PAVILION, buying some oil for Master Iason, when he became aware of a familiar presence—Xian Sami’s distinctive scent. He turned and found his former Master staring down at him.

“Ju,” the Blondie said softly.

“Mast—Lord Sami.”

For a moment, neither of them said anything as they gazed at one another.

“Is Lord Mink treating you well?” Xian asked finally.

“Oh...yes.” Juthian averted his eyes.

The Blondie felt a stab of jealousy when Juthian avoided his gaze. He wondered if Iason had enjoyed the boy already. He wanted to ask if this were the case but knew it would not be appropriate. His eyes gravitated to Juthian’s hand, and when he saw the vials of oil, he bristled.

“Are you buying those at Iason’s command?” he asked, his eyes dark with anger.

Juthian nodded, feeling a little embarrassed. He knew Lord Sami would mistake the errand, but he didn’t feel it was his place to expound on Master Iason’s orders.

“I see,” Xian remarked a little coolly, his jealousy eating away at him. He studied Juthian for a moment. “Ju,” he whispered.

Juthian looked up at him, his eyes glimmering with tears.

Surprised, Xian reached down, his gloved finger capturing a tear that, at that moment, began its path down his cheek. “Is he hurting you?” he demanded, frowning.

Juthian shook his head. “No. He is...very kind to me.”

“Then,” Xian shook his head, mystified, “why do you cry, Ju?”

“Because...because,” Juthian looked around him, to be sure no one was listening. “Because I miss you, Master.”

“Oh Ju,” Xian sighed, his heart beating faster. He tilted the boy’s chin up with his fingers, wishing desperately that he could kiss him. “I am not your Master anymore.”

“I know.” Juthian’s voice was barely a whisper.

Lord Sami studied him for a moment, longing to put his arms around him and take him home and then...take him to his bed. He released his hold on Juthian’s chin, but found that his hand moved, unbidden, down the boy’s body to his waist, resting on his hip. And then, suddenly, he felt an irresistible urge for more intimacy. He bent down and kissed him.

Juthian, though surprised, did not resist, thrilled at his former Master’s advances. Xian broke away, his hand dropping to his side.

“I should not have done that,” he whispered. “Please forgive me.” The Blondie looked around nervously, glad to see that no one



appeared to have observed his illicit actions. He was surprised at himself for kissing Juthian; he certainly had not intended to do so. And yet...he longed to take him. Now that he had tasted the pleasures of sex, Xian had not been able to stop thinking about Juthian, wondering what it would be like with the boy.

“But I...I liked it,” Juthian answered.

“Oh, Ju.” Lord Sami closed his eyes.

What they were doing was completely wrong. Juthian properly belonged to Iason now. And yet he was tempted to simply seize the boy and take him home. He fought his more barbaric impulses, trying to decide what to do.

“I’m going to talk with Iason,” he said finally. “I don’t know what he’ll say. But I’ll see if I can get you back, Juthian.”

Excited, Juthian nodded. “Then, you want me?”

Xian smiled. “Oh yes. I never stopped wanting you, Ju. But...I was angry.”

Juthian bowed his head, ashamed.

“Now, that’s enough of that,” Xian scolded gently. “You’ve been sufficiently punished for that. Don’t you agree?”

Juthian nodded. “Oh yes. It was...a really thorough punishment.”

“Yes. I confess,” Lord Sami fumbled a bit with his words, unaccustomed to having to admit his own errors, “perhaps...I was a bit harsh, Ju.”

Juthian, although agreeing with this assertion, wisely chose to remain silent.

For a moment, they contemplated one another.

“Ju, if you come back with me, there’s something that I...that you should know.”

The boy waited, eyes wide.

Xian hesitated for a moment, looking around again to be sure no one was within earshot. “If you come back,” he continued, his voice low and urgent, “then I might want, that is...I am *sure* that I might demand...intimate favors from you.”

His heart beating fast, Juthian stared at his former Master, hardly daring to believe what he was proposing.

“That shocks you, I can see,” Xian said, looking disappointed.

Juthian swallowed and then nodded. "Yes. I admit I am shocked," he whispered. "But I am not opposed to it. What I mean to say is...I would very much enjoy...obeying your every command—including those for intimate favors." The boy smiled a little when saying these last few words, finding his former Master's phrasing delightfully quaint.

The Blondie's face lit up at Juthian's reply. "You mean this?"

Juthian nodded.

"Then, say nothing of this to anyone. I must think about how I can persuade Iason." Lord Sami felt a little worried on this final point. He knew Iason would be very annoyed at losing an attendant he had just trained, and he was not at all sure the Blondie would agree to release him. "Now Ju," he whispered, pulling him behind a tall display of paddles where they would not be observed. "I want to kiss you again."

Juthian needed no persuading, thrilled when Xian pulled him close. The Blondie slid his hands down the boy's back as he bent down and prodded his mouth open with his tongue. Lord Sami's kiss was intoxicating, and Juthian's heart was beating so hard he could hear it in his ears.

He could feel his Master's hardening erection pressed against his stomach, and he was both alarmed and delighted when Lord Sami took hold of his hand, guiding him to his cock. Not quite sure what to do, Juthian simply stroked him a little tentatively.

Excited, Xian fumbled with his trousers and released himself fully. Then he took Juthian's hand and placed it firmly around his organ, showing him how he wanted to be stroked.

Thrilled, and yet terrified they would be discovered, Juthian began stimulating his former Master, who continued to kiss him hungrily, almost wildly.

Xian hardly knew what he was doing, but suddenly he felt he could not stop what he had started. He was so aroused that Juthian's warm hand around his organ was an irresistible stimulus, and within just a few moments, he realized he was going to climax. The thrill of knowing they were doing something forbidden, and in a public place, propelled him quickly.

“Oh Ju,” he moaned, breaking away. “Keep...keep doing that. I can’t stop now.” He reached down, holding Juthian’s hand and increasing the cadence of his strokes. “Good boy. Oh...perfect, Ju!” he whispered these last words as he felt his release come.

Throwing back his head, he managed to rein in his strong desire to cry out—unable, however, to keep from gasping as he climaxed, his semen pumping up and dripping down onto both of their hands. He closed his eyes, biting his lip.

Juthian watched his Master with shining eyes. It was a moment he had dreamt of for a long, long time. And suddenly it had happened, in a way he had hardly expected, on a gloomy afternoon when he had gone to the pavilion on a simple errand. And his Master wanted him and was going to try to get him back. Juthian treasured this knowledge, his heart nearly bursting with happiness.

Now Lord Sami opened his eyes, regarding his former pet with an inexplicable expression. “My Ju,” he said softly.

Juthian smiled. “My Master.”



“IT’S SWELLING.” IASON examined Riki’s hand, his brow furrowed with concern. “And some of this is your blood, Riki,” he scolded.

“It’s nothing,” the mongrel answered, though thoroughly enjoying his Master’s attention.

Iason answered this by lifting him up and setting him on the counter next to the bar sink. He turned on the water. “Let’s get you cleaned up.”

“Good afternoon, Master,” Juthian greeted as he approached him. Iason had just returned home with Riki and had immediately begun tending to the mongrel’s injuries. “Welcome back. Can I get you anything?”

“Some ice, Juthian.”

“Yes, Master.”

“Ouch!” Riki complained, as Iason forced his hand under the running water.

The Blondie smiled. "I see. You're the tough mongrel when it's four against one, but when it comes to cleaning your wounds you're just a little boy. Isn't that so?"

Riki ignored this, leaning forward to bury his face in Iason's hair. "You smell so fucking good," he averred.

Iason straightened, opening his mouth to reply but was silenced by Riki's demanding kiss. The mongrel pulled him close, opening his thighs and scooting forward to press his erection against Iason's stomach. He broke away from the kiss and began kissing and nibbling Iason's neck, eliciting gasps from the Blondie.

"Let me fuck you," Riki whispered.

Iason shivered at his aggressive manner, enjoying Riki's decidedly erotic thrusting against his stomach.

"Come on," the mongrel pleaded. "Please?"

"Very well," Iason answered, unable to resist his seduction. "Let's go to the bedroom."

"No. I wanna fuck you right here."

For a moment, the Blondie contemplated refusing him, but found his pet's domineering attitude rather exciting.

Juthian returned with a bowl of ice and a towel.

"Put those down, Juthian. And then you may leave the room. See that we're not disturbed."

"Yes, Master," Juthian murmured, suppressing a smile as he glanced at Riki.

Though he had not been directly addressed, Odi tactfully slipped out the front entrance to be sure no one was admitted into the penthouse for a while, before retreating to his room.

Iason turned back to Riki, who regarded him with unveiled lust.

"Get undressed," the mongrel commanded, pulling off his own shirt and tossing it aside. He jumped down from the counter and unzipped his pants, removing them as he watched the Blondie undress. "You're so fucking gorgeous, Iason," he breathed, his eyes glimmering as he took in the Blondie's naked form.

Distracted by the sound of running water, Riki turned to shut off the faucet and then caught sight of several familiar-looking vials sitting on the counter.

“Is this oil?” he asked, picking one up and shaking it.

“Yes, pet.”

“Ooo. I have an idea. Come over here. Turn around and put your hands on the counter.”

Riki then poured a generous amount of oil in his hand and slowly began applying it to the Blondie’s bare ass and thighs.

“Oh yeah. Now...let’s try this.” He hooked his arm under Iason’s thigh, lifting his leg up high. He was delighted with the view, his cock twitching at the site of his Master so exposed. “You’re so...you have no idea how fucking hot you look, all slippery and—I love this little hollow here.” Riki traced a finger along the Blondie’s inner thigh, his perfectly toned muscles flexing at his touch.

The mongrel held out his hand. “More oil,” he demanded, and Iason poured more into his hand.

This time Riki lubricated himself, groaning from the stimulation. He held out his hand again for more oil and then reached around and began coating Iason’s rigid erection, much to the Blondie’s complete delight.

“You like that, don’t you?” Riki whispered, sliding his erection between the Blondie’s cheeks in a tantalizing manner.

“Oh, yes,” Iason admitted, closing his eyes.

“I’m so fucking turned on,” Riki announced.

He pressed himself up to Iason’s portal and then eased forward, groaning as he sank inside. He looked down, fascinated by the sight of his erection disappearing into the Blondie’s depths. Then he began fucking him harder, though continuing to stimulate Iason with his hand.

Because they had both released so many times the previous day, the coitus lasted longer than usual, despite both of them being wildly aroused.

“Pet,” Iason gasped, thrilled.

“Yeah, you like being fucked, don’t you?” Riki purred, biting his neck. “You’re such a lovely little deviant. You’re Jupiter’s naughty boy, aren’t you?”

For some reason, these words stimulated the Blondie even more. He clutched the counter, overcome with pleasure.

“You’re so close,” Riki whispered urgently. “Let’s come together. Don’t hold back when you come. I wanna hear you.”

Thrilled with Riki’s whole manner, a side he had never really shown before, Iason began breathing hard, feeling his ascent begin.

“Don’t hold back,” Riki commanded again. “Oh...Iason...here we go. Come for me, lover.”

Upon hearing his pet call him “lover” for the first time, Iason suddenly climaxed, obeying his pet’s mandate and unleashing a low sex-cry so beautiful and sensual that Riki, who had been just hovering on the edge, immediately ejaculated. “Fuck yeah,” he groaned, thrusting a few more times, his eyes closed as he basked in the unbelievable pleasure of the moment.

“Oh fuck,” he said finally, as he collapsed forward onto Iason’s back. “That was...like the best fucking sex we’ve ever had.”

Iason did not reply, feeling a bit overcome with the experience.

Riki withdrew, smiling. “I get it. Your Blondie pride won’t let you admit that was the best fucking sex you’ve ever had?”

The Blondie turned around, looking down at him with such intensity that Riki’s smile faded.

“Pet,” Iason said, pulling him close. “Have you any idea...what you do to me?”

Riki smiled, closing his eyes as he leaned on his Master’s chest.



“ARE YOU SURE THIS IS OKAY?” Daryl asked, as he slid into the water next to Katze.

“Positive. Iason said we can use the pools whenever we want.”

“Ooo,” Daryl smiled. “It’s warm.”

“Yeah, nice huh? They’re both heated.”

“I like swimming.”

“Oh,” Katze whispered, pushing him up against the side of the pool, “we’re not going to be doing any swimming. At least not yet.” He forced Daryl’s mouth open with his tongue, kissing him passionately, and then slid his hands down his body to his hips.

Daryl closed his eyes, enjoying the kiss. When Katze broke away to begin kissing his neck, he shivered. "Let's come tonight," he pleaded softly.

Katze groaned, breaking away. "We can't, love. We can't use those every night. It's too dangerous."

"I don't care. I want to anyway."

Katze shook a finger in Daryl's face, laughing. "Naughty boy. Stop tempting me."

"Please? I really want to. And then we won't for a couple of days." Daryl attempted to seduce him by nibbling on his earlobe.

Katze shivered. "Oh, love."

"Please?" Daryl's voice lowered to the barest whisper. "I'll pleasure you with my tongue."

The amber-eyed youth groaned at this offer, finding it too tempting to resist. "Oh...fuck...all right. But we can't tomorrow *or* the next day."

"Though, I really should spank you for being so naughty," Katze teased, kissing his nose gently.

Daryl giggled at his threat, desperately hoping Katze would carry it out.

"You find that funny, do you?" Katze slid his hands around the boy's ass, squeezing him. "We'll see how humorous you think it is after I've turned you over my knee."

Smiling, the grey-eyed youth answered this by throwing his head back, inviting Katze to explore the tantalizing expanse of his throat.

"Daryl," he remarked, after a moment. "I've heard a very interesting rumor."

"Yeah?" Daryl's eyes were still closed as he enjoyed Katze's gentle kisses and nibbles.

"Yes. *Very* interesting. Although I'm not quite sure I believe it. About Raoul Am and Yui."

Daryl opened his eyes, intrigued.

Katze laughed at his expression. "I knew that would interest you."

The youth blushed, bowing his head.

Katze tilted his chin up with his finger. "Hey. Don't be embarrassed. It's all right. I don't mind that you're attracted to Yui."

Although,” now he leaned in closer, “if you ever actually did anything with him, I’d probably have to kill him.”

Daryl smiled at this.

“*And* spank you. Only it wouldn’t be a fun spanking.”

“I’d never be unfaithful to you, Katze.”

He smiled. “I know you wouldn’t.” Then his expression became serious. “Because if you did, you’d be in big trouble.”

“Oh yeah?” Daryl arched his eyebrows, enjoying Katze’s jealousy.

“That’s right. No one touches you but me. In fact,” Katze began kissing his neck again, making his way up to his ear, “perhaps I ought to give you a good, preemptive spanking in advance, just to be *sure* you don’t cheat on me.”

This elicited another giggle from Daryl, who was rather eager for such a spanking.

“You laugh, but I guarantee you, you wouldn’t like a real spanking from me, Daryl.”

Daryl’s smile suddenly faded, and he grew pale.

Katze laughed. “I’m only teasing you, love.”

His lover didn’t answer, his eyes dilating a bit.

Now Katze became alarmed. “Hey. Daryl. What’s wrong?”

“I’m...tired, Katze.”

“Fuck. I’m so stupid.” Katze immediately picked him up, carrying him up the steps and out of the pool. He set him down, wrapping a towel around him. “Are you okay?” He peered at him, worried. “You don’t look good, love. I’m gonna get some help.”

Daryl reached out and grabbed his arm. “No, Katze.”

“Don’t fight me on this,” Katze replied, a little angrily. “If I think you need medical attention, you’re getting it.”

Now Daryl raised his voice, which was unusual for the typically quiet, submissive youth. “I said *no*, Katze. I don’t want to go back to the hospital.”

“Dammit, Daryl,” Katze cursed, pulling him close. “Fuck!”

“I’ll be okay. I just need...to rest.”

“Of course you do. I’m an idiot.” Katze got up, lifting him easily and carrying him back to their room, completely oblivious to the fact that he was naked.



Juthian rushed toward them, worried. "Is he okay?"

"I'm fine," Daryl asserted, rather weakly.

"Call for some medical assistance," Katze ordered.

"No! I said *no*, Katze!" Daryl cried.

"Daryl," Katze replied through clenched teeth, "you're making me very angry."

"I don't care! I'm not going back!"

Juthian hesitated, unsure if he should obey Katze or not.

Katze sighed, exasperated. "All right. But if you don't seem better in *one hour*, I'm calling a medical team, whether you like it or not."

"Thank you, Katze," Daryl sighed, letting his head fall against his chest and closing his eyes.

Katze looked directly at Juthian, his eyes intense with worry. "Wait until I call you," he mouthed.

Juthian nodded, backing away.

Katze carried Daryl into their room and set him down on the bed, scolding him all the while.

"Please, Katze. Stop it."

"I'm just angry because I love you, Daryl. And I'm fucking worried," Katze replied, running his hand through his hair. "And I don't see how it would hurt you to have a professional check you out. Why are you being so stubborn?"

Daryl didn't reply right away. Deep in his heart, he didn't want the medical team to come because he knew something was wrong, but he didn't want to face up to it. And he certainly didn't want to go back to the hospital. He had a bad feeling about the hospital. He smiled. "I'll be okay. I promise."

Sighing, Katze lay down next to him, pulling him close. "I'll hold you to that. Oh, Daryl. If anything ever happened to you...I think I'd go out of my mind."

Daryl closed his eyes, enjoying the warmth of his lover's arms, and fighting back the tears that threatened to spill down his cheeks.

## Jupiter's Blondies

KATZE BRUSHED DARYL'S HAIR from his eyes, peering at his face.

"Quit staring at me," Daryl snapped, pouting.

A small smile tugged at Katze's lips. "Don't tell me what to do, naughty boy. I'll stare at you all bloody day if I feel like it."

"I told you. I'm fine."

"I'll be the judge of that."

Noises from the foyer alerted them both that Iason and Riki had finally returned. Katze leapt up. "I should greet them."

"I will, too," Daryl said, starting to rise.

Katze immediately pushed him back down. "No, you won't. You're not moving."

"Katze!"

"Obey me," Katze warned, his eyes twinkling. "Or I'll punish you, just like I promised."

This threat elicited a small smile from the very pale boy, who felt a surge of love and longing for the gorgeous, auburn-haired male pinning him down so firmly.

"Kiss me," he pleaded.

"I'll kiss you," Katze replied softly, "but I'm afraid we can't do what we were planning earlier. Not now."

"But you promised!"

"That was before you practically passed out on me."

"You promised," Daryl repeated, sulking.

Katze touched a finger to Daryl's nose. "Hush."

Annoyed, Daryl turned his head away when Katze bent down to try and kiss him.

“Oh,” Katze laughed. “Now you’re holding out on me?”

Daryl remained silent, looking away.

Katze took hold of his chin and held him firmly as he forced Daryl’s mouth open with his tongue. Although Daryl resisted initially, he soon melted from the sweet persuasiveness of his lover’s kiss. Katze explored him skillfully, gently bringing color back to his pale cheeks.

“Mmm.” Daryl broke away, his eyes shining. “I want to make love, Katze.”

“And I want to *fuck* you,” Katze replied. “Which reminds me—I never got to tell you what I heard about Raoul and Yui.”

Daryl’s brow furrowed a bit as he tried to imagine what Raoul and Yui had to do with lovemaking or fucking.

“Raoul,” Katze continued slowly, enjoying the confusion on Daryl’s face, “is going to have Yui restored.”

As the full meaning of this reached Daryl’s consciousness, his eyes clouded over with confusion. “But he would only do that if...?”

“Exactly. That’s the rumor. Raoul is *taking* Yui.”

Daryl thought about this for a moment. “Impossible,” he replied finally, shaking his head.

“That’s what I thought, but I heard it from Heiku’s attendant, Sarius. And you know Sarius—he’s a gossip, but he never spreads rumors that aren’t true. It seems Heiku is doing the procedure. If Jupiter ever finds out what they’re up to, they’ll all be summoned before her, I’m sure of it.”

“An unsanctioned restoration—wouldn’t that be against the General Code?”

“Yeah, I think so, at least that’s what I’ve heard. Not that I’ve actually ever *read* the Code or anything. Don’t you find it interesting that those three are willing to take that kind of risk?”

Daryl nodded.

“Hold on. I’ll be right back.”

Katze used Daryl’s preoccupied state to slip out of the room, where he was immediately stopped by Juthian outside the door.

“Are they back? I thought I heard them.”

Juthian nodded. “But they’re...not to be disturbed.”

The unmistakable sounds of coital exploration now reached Katze, and he and Juthian exchanged knowing smiles.

"I see. It seems they've sorted out their differences already."

"They barely got back before they were at it." Juthian's eyes glowed as he imagined himself in a similar scenario with Lord Sami.

"I'm dying for a peek," Katze whispered.

"Katze! You'd better not."

"I'll sneak in through the back door to the kitchen and get a glimpse from there. Come with me. You know you want to."

"Well," Juthian hesitated, feeling rather torn between the need to be obedient and his own raging curiosity.

As if deciding the matter for him, Katze pressed a hand to his back, pushing him down the guest wing toward the back door to the kitchen. They both entered there and found Tai already engaged in his own voyeuristic activities, peeking through the crack in the kitchen door and pumping his rather substantial cock as he did so.

Juthian started to giggle, and Katze quickly held his hand over his mouth. "Quiet," he whispered in his ear, though he was fighting a similar impulse to laugh.

Tai turned and, upon realizing that his little project was no longer a private endeavor, blushed furiously, fumbling to put his happy toy away.

"It's okay," Katze whispered with a grin. "We wanted to have a look ourselves."

"You can...see everything...right through here," Tai whispered, still red in the face but a little less embarrassed to know that Katze and Juthian had come on a similar mission.

Katze and Juthian made their way to the door as Tai excused himself, making a hasty exit out the back door. The poor boy had been on the verge of ejaculation when he had been interrupted and was now desperate for relief. He stepped into the hallway, immediately freeing himself to finish what he had started.

As it happened, timing was decidedly against Tai that day. Odi came out of his room at that precise moment, heading ostensibly for the balcony to smoke, though in reality he intended to investigate the interesting sounds emanating from the foyer. Although he had

initially retreated to his room when it became clear that Iason and Riki were engaging in sexual intimacy, now his curiosity had gotten the better of him, and he hoped to get a peek at the lovers.

Upon apprehending Tai, he stopped, raising an eyebrow as a grin spread across his face. "Oh my. Please, don't let me interrupt you."

"Oh," Tai groaned. "Fuck." He was now so close to climaxing that he didn't know what to do and for a moment simply leaned against the wall, cock in hand, gritting his teeth.

"Would you like me to help you out?" Odi offered, his dark eyes glimmering seductively.

"Oh shit. Don't...don't tease me," Tai begged.

"I wasn't teasing. If you must know, I've had my eye on you for quite a while. This seems like the perfect opportunity to...*feel you out* on that point."

Odi smiled at his own humor, his eyes taking in Tai's exposed genitals with unveiled appreciation.

Tai was only able to respond to this with a rather strange gasping sound as he eyed the handsome bodyguard incredulously.

"I just propositioned you, but I didn't quite catch your answer."

"I...I...oh! I can't—"

Odi took a step forward, pressing Tai against the wall with his body as he bent down to kiss the rather surprised, but willing, boy. The bodyguard let his hands slide down Tai's body, one hand taking hold of his engorged organ as he continued to kiss him.

Tai made a sort of desperate sound that was lost in the delicious fury of Odi's kiss. In the next instant he had released, semen dripping down Odi's hand and covering the front of Tai's pants.

Odi broke away, smiling. "That was quick."

"I...I usually last longer," Tai protested, embarrassed. "I was just...really ready."

"No need for apologies. That's the closest thing to sex I've had in a long while. So perhaps we could try it again sometime?"

"Maybe," Tai conceded, trembling as he zipped up his pants. He made a move as if to rush away, but Odi grabbed him, staying him.

"Hold on. You're not just going to run off now, are you? Just come and go?" He raised his eyebrow again, his dark eyes shining.

"Please," Tai begged. "I'm...I'm so embarrassed. I would like to go to my room."

"There's nothing to be embarrassed about," Odi replied, though he released him.

Tai immediately bolted and locked himself in his room, refusing to come out again for a good hour.

In the kitchen, Katze and Juthian were enjoying their view of the decidedly erotic sexual exploits taking place by the bar.

"Holy shit," Katze breathed. "Iason is fucking gorgeous."

"So is Riki," Juthian whispered, admiring the mongrel's form.

"Yeah," Katze smiled. "He is a cute little punk, isn't he? Shit. Listen to Iason."

The Blondie's quiet, breathy moans were spine-tingling.

"Master Iason has a very large," Juthian began, and then stopped, feeling that it was not his place to comment on something so intimate regarding his Master.

"All Blondies do. So I've heard."

"I bet...I bet that hurts."

"Yes. But Riki's got the right idea. Supposedly there's nothing quite like taking a Blondie. It's said they have a special little squeezing trick they do."

Juthian considered this, falling silent. He felt a little sad knowing he would never have the opportunity to experience that now.

"Speaking of enormous cocks, did you get a look at Tai?"

Juthian nodded, holding a hand up to his mouth to suppress an instinctive giggle.

"I wonder if all Aristians are that huge, or just him?"

"I would never have guessed," Juthian admitted. "He looks like a little boy. His expressions, I mean."

"No shit. Who would have thought he was packing all that."

"How's Daryl?"

"Oh," Katze straightened up. "I think he's probably okay, but I'm not taking any chances. As soon as they're done in there, let's call for a medical team. Daryl's gonna be pissed at me, but I don't care. I want him checked out."

Juthian nodded.

“Actually, I’d better get back, or he’ll come looking for me.”

“Oh...I think they’re almost there,” Juthian observed, as the noise level from the next room increased.

They both peeked through the door once more to watch the Blondie and his pet climax.

“Bloody hell. That was fucking beautiful,” Katze announced.

“Yeah,” Juthian agreed, a little wistfully.

“Hey. Remind me sometime and I’ll show you some interesting devices I have. You practically won’t even know the difference.” Katze smiled, putting a hand on Juthian’s shoulder.

Juthian shook his head at this, puzzled. “Huh?”

“I’ll explain later. I better go back before Daryl gets out of bed.”

“I’ll call for a medical team.”

Katze hesitated. “Wait. Iason will want to know what’s going on. Let me talk to him.”

He looked through the crack again and saw that both Iason and Riki were getting dressed. He smiled, now getting a good view of Riki’s ass.

“Looks like the mongrel got a nasty strapping yesterday.”

Juthian looked, nodding when he saw the strap marks that had begun to darken into bruises. “He’s lucky that’s all he got.”

“You’re right. He *is* damn lucky. I wanted to discipline him myself, the little brat. In fact...maybe I *will*, sometime when he least expects it.” Katze’s face grew serious. “I never want to see Iason look like that again.”

“He was pretty upset,” Juthian agreed.

“Riki’s heading outside for a smoke. And Iason’s dressed. He’s getting himself some wine, I think—you should go out there and offer to do that for him.”

Juthian obediently acted on Katze’s suggestion, surprising Iason with his quiet approach.

“Can I get that for you, Master?” he asked softly.

“Ah. Yes, Juthian. That would be lovely.” Iason then went to his favorite chair, sitting down with a small smile at his lips as he reviewed in his mind the incontrovertibly delicious sex he and Riki had just shared.

Then Katze sauntered into the hall.

"Katze. I wanted to talk to you."

"Oh?" Katze tried to hide his impatience; now that he had made up his mind to do so, he wanted the medical team called.

Juthian brought Iason his wine and the Blondie took a leisurely sip before continuing.

"Yes. Are you aware that there's a mongrel from the slums attempting to take over your market?"

Katze bristled, crossing his arms on his chest. "Who?"

"His name is Kei. He's an acquaintance of Riki's. Perhaps *acquaintance* is not quite the right word. Riki didn't seem to have much good to say about him."

"I'll take care of it."

"Please do."

"Iason. May I please call a medical team for Daryl?"

"Why? Is he ill?"

"He doesn't look well to me."

"Why didn't you come to me sooner?" Iason asked.

"To be honest, you were...engaged."

A strange look passed over Iason's features as he considered, perhaps seriously for the first time, that what Riki and he did together was no secret at the penthouse.

"I see," he said quietly, lowering his eyes. "I suppose that is so. Then, yes, you may call for a medical team."

Katze gave him a slight bow of gratitude, rushing over to the communications center.

Iason rose. "Is he in his room?"

"Yes," Katze answered, looking a little alarmed. "But don't trouble yourself; he'll be quite surprised if you enter."

"When it comes to my household, I'll decide what's best, Katze," Iason replied, a little sharply.

"Yes, Sir." Katze felt chastened by the rebuff, feeling color rise to his cheeks.

Iason then went to Daryl's room, the door—like every door in the penthouse—immediately opening for him.

Daryl startled. "Master Iason," he said, though a bit weakly.



Iason studied him, concerned. "Katze's right. You don't look well."

"I'm fine," Daryl insisted.

"We'll let the professionals decide that."

"I told him not to call them!"

Iason put his hands on his hips. "Are you raising your voice to me, Daryl?"

"N-n...no, Sir. I'm sorry. I was...I told Katze *not* to call for a medical team. I'm just a little upset that he did so anyway."

"In my view he should have come to me sooner. How long have you been feeling ill?"

Daryl looked away, unsure of what to say.

"Answer me," Iason demanded, a little harshly.

Katze came into the room, his arms across his chest as he waited for Daryl to reply.

"Just these last couple of days."

"Why didn't you tell someone?"

"Because...because I didn't want to go back to the hospital."

At this, Iason released a long sigh. "Such foolishness. You really surprise me, Daryl. Why wouldn't you want to get medical treatment? I doubt there's anything wrong with you that can't be easily fixed."

Katze, though silent, gave Daryl a scolding look, which was returned with a glare.

"In any case, it's not your decision whether you return to the hospital or not. And henceforth if you hide anything from me, you can expect to be punished, Daryl."

"Yes, Master," came the soft whisper.

With that, Iason left the room. Katze continued to stand, staring down at Daryl angrily. "So you've been feeling bad for a few days?"

The grey-eyed youth refused to reply, turning away. Katze waited until the door hummed shut and then approached him, looking ready to launch into a scolding.

Daryl glanced at him, and seeing his look, scowled. "Fuck off."

Katze dropped down on the bed, continuing to stare at him. "What did you say?"

"I said fuck off!"

"I know you don't mean that. And I know you're pissed at me. That's just too bad. I told you I'd have my way on this."

"But you *promised*!"

"So I lied. Is this what you're going to do, pout like a baby?"

In response to this, Daryl attempted to punch him in the arm, but Katze easily grabbed his wrist and then took his other and pinned him to the bed, shifting positions to lie on top of him.

"Get off me!"

"Hush. Iason will come back and punish you. Or maybe *I'll* punish you."

"Dammit, Katze. You fucking prick."

A little surprised at Daryl's anger, not to mention his rather uncharacteristic cursing, Katze continued to pin him down until he stopped struggling.

"There. Are you going to behave now? Or are you going to continue acting like a spoiled brat?"

"Let me go," he whimpered.

"I'll let you go when I'm good and ready. But let me tell you something. What Iason said goes for me too: hide something like this from me again and you *will* be punished."

Daryl gave a small laugh of contempt. "What gives *you* the right to punish me?"

Katze studied him for a long moment. "You're acting strangely. That's how I know something's wrong. But I'll tell you what gives me the right. My concern for you."

"I don't have to obey you. You're not my Master."

"Perhaps," Katze conceded, as he released him and sat up. "That's true, I'm not your Master. But," now he traced a finger along his cheek, "since you don't have the sense to take care of yourself, I'm assuming that responsibility. And that means any time you disobey me on that count, you'll be subject to whatever punishment I see fit. And at the moment I have two punishments in mind: either I shall tickle you, or I shall give you a spanking."

At this, Daryl smiled.

"So, you *do* still have a sense of humor." Katze leaned down and kissed him gently on the lips.

"Please don't tickle me."

"No? Then that just leaves the spanking, which I shall give you once I've determined you're well enough for it."

Daryl giggled weakly.

"Why do you persist in laughing at my spanking threats? I assure you, you will be most unhappy when I'm finished with your ass."

The gentle youth fell silent for a moment. "I'm sorry, Katze."

"I know. Don't think that gets you off the hook, though," the eunuch replied gently.

"I just...have a real bad feeling."

"And you decided you'd keep it from me? We're supposed to share things like this. Right?"

"I guess."

Katze leaned closer. "I *know*. I wouldn't hide something like this from you."

"But...I'm just afraid...."

"What are you afraid of? Tan Med is the best hospital in the Quadrant and you know it. You're being stupid, Daryl. Iason's right. There's nothing wrong with you that they can't fix, unless you refuse to get treated, like some dumbass."

Daryl began to cry.

"Hey." Katze bent down to kiss his tears. "All right. I didn't mean that. You're not a dumbass."

"I said mean things to you."

Katze shrugged. "I've got thick skin. Forget it."

"If anything happens, I just want you to know...how much I love you, Katze."

Katze put a hand over his mouth. "Hush with that. I know you love me. And I love *you*, more than anything. But nothing's going to happen, sweetheart."

"But—"

"I said *hush*."

Daryl sighed and closed his eyes. "I'm tired."

"That's it. Just rest, love."

Katze brushed Daryl's tears from his face, worried. He'd never seen his lover look so frail, not even when he had been in the

hospital. His instincts told him something was wrong, and so he stayed with Daryl for some time, praying to Astrajia to watch over his beloved.



RAOUL OPENED HIS EYES, STARING at the tiny ball of fur that was curled up on his chest.

“You,” he accused, his voice thick from sleep.

Yui then woke up, giggling when he saw the kitten sleeping on his Master’s chest. “He likes you.”

“Hmmm.”

“Do you want me to take him?”

“He’s warm,” Raoul noted, as Yui picked him up.

“He’s so cute,” Yui said happily. “What should we name him?”

“Does he need a name?”

“Of course he needs a name,” Yui laughed.

“Then I’ll leave it up to you.”

“But I can’t think of one.”

“Once again, you’re failing in your kitten duties. I warned you, I shall have to punish you, I think.”

“No! Don’t punish me,” Yui cried in mock terror.

“Yes. I must.”

“What are you going to do to me?”

Lord Am took the kitten, which was by then wide-awake, tossed him to the floor and then pinned Yui to the bed. “I shall violate you repeatedly, *after* I take a shower.”

“But I’m a little sore,” Yui protested.

“Are you defying me?” Raoul demanded.

“No, Master.”

“Good. Because today is our last opportunity for some serious fornication before your procedure.” He kissed Yui’s throat and then nibbled on his earlobe. “But I promise to be gentle,” he whispered.

Yui, who really *was* rather sore, was actually dreading more penetration, however gentle. But he was also thrilled to be a day

away from his restoration, and he was certainly willing to endure whatever his Master wanted.

Raoul, who had been only teasing about taking Yui repeatedly, discovered that the mere act of lying atop him and kissing his neck aroused him to the point that he desired consummation.

“Come with me.”

He rose, holding out a hand to Yui, who took it and followed him to the bath hall, where they both freshened up. Raoul punched in the shower controls, and the water began its perfect spray, the temperature exactly right.

Then he led Yui inside, where he pushed him up against the shower wall and began kissing him, at first gently and then with greater urgency.

“Yui,” he whispered, fondling the hollow in the boy’s pelvis where soon something else would be waiting, “I want to hear you cry out your passion.”

“Yes, Master,” Yui stammered, not sure what else to say.

“Soon. Then I will hear you...and see your face.” Raoul bit the side of Yui’s throat, eliciting a small gasp.

Lord Am smiled as he pulled away. “You’re so untouched.” He bent closer, resting his forehead on Yui’s. “But I intend to violate you completely.” As if to emphasize this point, Raoul slid his hand down between Yui’s legs, suggestively inserting a finger.

Yui winced, unable to help himself.

Raoul pulled back, studying him. “You’re really that sore?”

His unveiled disappointment bothered Yui, who shook his head. “Don’t mind me. I want you to do whatever pleases you, Master.”

For a long moment Raoul simply stared down at him, struggling with the strong emotions that pulled at him. Yui’s perfect obedience was a source of great pleasure to the Blondie, who found that something deep within him yearned to be catered to, to have his every command obeyed without question, his every need anticipated and met immediately.

Now that he had begun taking Yui, he realized that the boy had been serving him admirably for years. He also knew that he had, on numerous occasions, threatened him with various punishments that

bordered on the absurd; and yet, never once had Yui rebelled against him. His wishes had always been promptly met, without complaint. For some time he had been meaning to say something about the way he had treated Yui in the past, but he had never found a way to begin.

He decided that this was the moment. "Yui," he began, and then faltered, falling silent for a moment.

Yui looked up at him with large, brilliant green eyes, waiting. Raoul traced a finger along his cheek, marveling at the softness of his skin.

"There were times," he started again, "when I...threatened you. In the past, I mean. Perhaps I frightened you."

Yui, taking his Master's sudden silence as a hint that he should respond, thought about this for a moment. "At times," he admitted and then smiled. "But I did not truly believe you would do most of those things."

"No. I certainly would not have. I was only...before you, that is...before I began to take you, I did not see you in the same way I do now. You, or any attendant, for that matter."

Yui nodded. "Of course, Master. You are a Blondie Elite. I am just an attendant."

Raoul let his fingers move to Yui's mouth, tracing a path along his upper lip. "Not *just* an attendant."

He said this so softly that Yui could barely hear him. Unsure how to respond, the youth simply looked up at the magnificent Blondie, marveling at the beauty of his body glistening in the water spray.

Lord Am took the boy's hand and brought it to his already engorged cock, showing him with firm strokes how he wanted to be pleased. Yui obliged him, sending shivers of excitement through the Blondie, who now desperately wanted to take the boy but was reluctant to cause him any more pain.

Yui smiled at Raoul's vocalizations, his tiny gasps and moans. The lust in the Blondie's eyes was a powerful source of persuasion. He found that he truly wanted to give Lord Am all that he could, despite his soreness. With deliberate suggestiveness, he lifted a leg and hooked it over his Master's arm.

Needing no further prompting, Raoul lifted Yui's other leg, pinning him up against the wall as he repositioned himself to press up to his portal. "Yui," he breathed. "I want you so terribly."

"I am ready for you."

Closing his eyes, the Blondie penetrated, his groans mingling with Yui's whimpers. "I'm hurting you," he said, yet found he was unable to stop himself from continuing to enter until he was fully inside. He then pulled back and plunged in again, moaning.

Yui struggled to rein in his whimpers and cries, biting his lip and closing his eyes. He was dreadfully sore, and yet it thrilled him to hear his Master's pleasure. "No," he answered.

Lord Am opened his eyes. "Don't lie to me." He pulled out and penetrated again, this time a little harder.

The boy cried out openly, his nails unconsciously digging into the Blondie's arms. "Yes," Yui admitted. "It does hurt...a bit."

"You're a good boy." Raoul bent down to explore his mouth with a tantalizing kiss, and Yui went limp in his arms. This relaxed him enough to make the penetration less painful.

Sensing Yui's sudden reception, Lord Am immediately took advantage, thrusting into him with hard, almost violent strokes, his salacious art accompanied by an escalating series of his own groans, gasps and growls.

"Oh yes," he exclaimed, excited beyond bearing. "You feel magnificent, Yui."

The boy now found that he was starting to enjoy the sex...a bit, at least. He desperately wondered what it would be like to climax, and his heart pounded as he realized that soon...very soon...he would find out.

"Master," he said softly.

Lord Am answered this with a grunt, opening his eyes to regard him with a lust-filled gaze.

"When I'm reconstructed, will you let me take you?"

Raoul's eyes glimmered mysteriously at this. He suddenly repositioned Yui further up the wall, thrusting into him so hard that the boy cried out again. "Oh, so you want to take your Master? Naughty boy," he hissed, as he approached his critical point.

Yui, suddenly realizing that perhaps he had overstepped his boundaries by asking for such a thing, replied, a little meekly, "I'm sorry, Master."

"Hush." Lord Am closed his eyes, throwing his head back as he finally climaxed. "Sweet Mother of Amoi," he breathed, shuddering.

For a long moment they remained thus, Raoul standing and holding Yui up against the shower wall, the water spraying down on them both. Finally, the Blondie withdrew, releasing the boy's legs and setting him back on his feet.

"I'm sorry," Yui repeated again, worried because his Master had called him a "naughty boy".

"What did I just tell you?" Raoul scolded, with a smile. "I like that you asked me that. I love your obedience, Yui, but," now he leaned closer, looking him straight in the eyes, "a little naughtiness can be interesting, too."

Yui, unsure how to digest this information, remained quiet, wondering what his Master meant.

"Yes," Lord Am continued, "one of these days I'd like to see you be deliberately naughty. Then I'd have to punish you." He smiled, his eyes shining.

Yui giggled.

"Oh, you find that funny, do you? Suppose I tied you up and gave you a good strapping? You wouldn't be laughing then, would you?"

"No, Master," Yui replied happily, already scheming how he could be 'deliberately naughty' in a way that would please Lord Am. He failed to comprehend that punishment at the hands of the Blondie, however playful, was something he ought to most conscientiously avoid.

They finished their shower then, both of them realizing how hungry they were. "I'll make a big breakfast," Yui said.

"Good. I'm famished."

As Raoul stepped out of the shower, he was surprised by the kitten who, having perceived the Blondie's tossing him off the bed earlier as a challenge requiring a response, now opted for a counterattack, leaping onto his leg and sinking his claws into the Blondie's damp skin.



Lord Am cried out, shaking his leg in a futile attempt to detach the kitten.

Yui, struggling to hold back an onslaught of furious giggling, immediately moved to assist his Master, managing to persuade the kitten to release his rather formidable hold.

“That blasted pixie!” Raoul growled, holding out his leg to examine it. “He broke the skin!”

“Yes. He is very naughty.” It took all of Yui’s abilities not to laugh at his Master, who once again seemed to have been bested by a small ball of fur, and who looked rather comical standing there, naked, dripping wet, with his leg held out in front of him to examine the damage. He held the kitten up to his face to cover his smile and the kitten immediately began to purr. “Master! He *is* a pixie! That’s it...we’ll call him Pixie!”

Lord Am shrugged at this, starting to regret bringing the troublesome creature into his home.

“When he’s a little older, we can have his claws removed.”

“Yes. Let’s do that.” Raoul was much more enthusiastic about this prospect than about what his nemesis was actually named.

“He’s only playing with you.”

Lord Am stood, hands on hips, looking down at Yui in disbelief. “Are you chiding me, Yui?”

Yui shook his head furiously. “N-no...Master.” Then, remembering Raoul’s earlier remarks, he changed his strategy. “I mean, yes, Master. I *am* chiding you.” He put Pixie down, and the kitten darted away on some other adventure.

The Blondie laughed, pulling Yui close. “I see. So, you’re being deliberately naughty now. Then, I suppose you’ve given me a good excuse to punish you. But I don’t know if I should act on it, since I know you’re only being naughty to be obedient.”

Perplexed, the boy looked up at him, rubbing his nose, which still tickled from the fur of the kitten. “Well,” he began and then stopped, bewildered as to what he should say next.

Lord Am found this slight movement endearing and wondered how he could have lived so many years with Yui without noticing his charms. “Tomorrow Yui,” he said softly. “Are you ready?”

Yui nodded, closing his eyes as he leaned against the Blondie's warm chest. He was more than ready. Tomorrow, for the first time in his life, he would truly be a man.



RIKI STEPPED DOWN INTO THE TUB, wincing. His backside still burned from Iason's strapping, and already he felt a little sore from his skirmish at Depravities. Mostly it was his arm that hurt, but now that several hours had gone by, his leg was starting to ache as well. Even so he smiled, remembering the fight and how he'd left all of Bison lying in the dirt.

"Riki?" Juthian was standing at the door to the bath with a tray of coffee and cookies. "Tai wondered if you wanted a snack."

"Hell yes," the mongrel replied. "I'm starving. Hey, can you pour me a cup of that coffee?"

"Of course," Juthian answered, setting the tray down near Riki. "Can I get you anything else?"

The mongrel considered him for a moment. "You got a smoke?" he whispered.

Juthian shook his head, handing him his coffee. "I don't smoke. Anyway, Katze told me not to give you any."

"Dammit." Riki sighed. So, Iason had apparently already told Katze about his smoking restrictions, ruining all his plans to score an extra smoke or two. He was dying for a cigarette but was trying to hold off. He'd smoked one when they'd returned to the penthouse. That left only four for the rest of the day.

"Try the cookies," Juthian encouraged. "Tai said he made them especially for you."

"Yeah?" Riki picked up one of the crescent-shaped cookies, examining it. "Ooo. Frosting." He took a bite. "Holy shit!" he exclaimed, mouth full of cookie. "These are good."

Juthian nodded, leaning forward. "Don't tell Master Iason, but Tai put some special ingredients in it. He says it will help you with your soreness and your craving for smokes."

Riki blinked at this, his respect for the Aristian reaching a whole new level. "Tell Tai I love him forever."

Juthian laughed.

"That's the first time I've seen you laugh since you came here," Riki remarked. "Hey! Where's Iason? Tell him I'm taking a bath." The mongrel grinned, knowing full well the Blondie would take his bait and come join him.

"I will," the boy replied, moving toward the door.

"Wait!" Riki exclaimed suddenly. "I want to ask you something. Um...about when I was gone. Did Iason sleep with cat-boy?"

"I don't think they slept," Juthian replied, looking a little uneasy.

"What does that mean?"

"I mean, they weren't in bed together."

"Well, did they fuck?"

Juthian hesitated for a moment. "I think so, Riki."

A little disappointed, the mongrel fell silent. He took another bite of his cookie, frowning. "How many times?"

"I really don't know. I didn't see anything, but...I think they took a bath together."

Riki brooded a bit over this. Although he had told Iason to relieve himself with the Xeronian, he found the reality that he had actually done so a bit upsetting. He felt more than jealous; he was a little hurt as well. Despite all his rebellions and protests, Riki had always secretly enjoyed the knowledge that he was the Blondie's "special" pet. He couldn't help but wonder how Iason felt toward Enyu or how much he had enjoyed the sex. The more he thought about it, the more upset he became.

The mongrel waited in the bath for a long time, until his fingers began to wrinkle and the water grew cool. When Iason didn't come, he began to feel a bit neglected. He had expected to be pampered on his first day back at the penthouse, but Iason hadn't even come to watch him bathe.

Sulking, he finally got out of the bath and went to his room, dumping all his new clothes—still in bags—on the bed to decide what to wear. As he was sorting through his clothes, the barrette Guy had found in their room at the Denovian Royal Suites fell onto

the mattress. He picked it up, smiling slightly as he remembered his afternoon with Ima. The barrette had a pretty violet gem embedded in it that sparkled when he turned it one way or the other. He opened the drawer in the nightstand next to his bed where he kept a small pile of mementos and tossed it in, glad to have a souvenir from his rendezvous with the naughty little pet.

Turning his attention back to his clothes, he spent a few minutes carefully spreading out his new pants and shirts on the bed. He finally decided to wear a pair of tight leather pants and a mesh tank—much like the mesh tank Katze often wore—and one that showed off his new nipple ring.

He smiled, knowing that Iason would love his new clothes. He couldn't wait to see the Blondie's expression when he came walking into the great hall.



“YOU'RE DOING IT AGAIN.”

Askel held out his hands, his mouth dropping open. “What? I'm just fucking sitting here.”

“No, you're making that sound.”

“I'm not making any fucking sound!”

“You are. Like this.” Freyn demonstrated with his teeth, grinding them together.

“I don't sound like that!” Askel protested.

“Yes, you do. And you make that same sound when you're sleeping, only a lot louder.”

“Then get your own fucking room! You don't have to sleep with me, you know. We're not eight anymore.”

“But,” Freyn said after a pause, “I can't sleep without you.”

“Then quit complaining about the sounds I make!”

“But it's annoying as hell.”

Askel sighed, exasperated. “Hey. Give me a smoke.”

“Odi says we're not supposed to smoke out here anymore, now that Iason's back.”

"Fuck that. I'm not sitting out here all day without a bloody smoke!" Aki snapped his fingers impatiently.

"Hey. I wonder if they're done in there. It's suddenly quiet."

The brothers sat for a moment, listening. "I can hear Iason's voice...and Katze."

"They're done, then," Freyn replied.

"Fucking give me a smoke already!"

"Hold up." Freyn straightened up, nodding toward a very strangely dressed Blondie who was heading toward them, trailed by a small boy, who was looking back at the statue of Jupiter at the end of the hall.

"That's Lord Ghan and his little pet," Askel whispered.

"Please?" Aki pleaded. "I wanna climb on the statue!"

"No, Aki. Not now."

Aki pouted at this, staring darkly at the bodyguards as though they were to blame.

"I'm here to see Iason Mink." Omaki announced his presence by halting and putting one hand on his hip.

The Blondie was dressed head to toe in skin-tight dark leather, a whip hanging from his belt. His hair, the color of rich gold, was loose and wild, framing his slender but well-formed physique. He wore a small hoop earring on one of his ears and a chain necklace bearing a strange symbol.

"Yes, Sir. However, Master Iason asked not to be disturbed some time ago," Freyn began.

"We think they're done, but we're not sure."

At this, Freyn jabbed his brother in the side with his elbow.

"Bloody hell!" Askel swore. "What did you do that for?"

"Hush, you moron."

Lord Ghan smiled, perfectly aware of what they were talking about. "I see. So the mongrel's back, then?"

"I have to use the bathroom," Aki announced.

"Oh. Well, in that case," Freyn flipped open his communicator.

"Odi said we're supposed to stop calling him on that," Askel pointed out.

"Like I don't know that? Idiot. What else am I supposed to do?"

Askel shrugged. "I'm just saying."

Freyn rolled his eyes, punching in Odi's codes.

"I told you not to call me!" the bodyguard complained.

"Yeah. I know. But Lord Ghan is here. Okay to let him in?"

"They're finished. Let me alert Iason first." Odi cut the transmission. Although he forgave Freyn on this occasion, he had become rather annoyed at the constant calls from the brothers. Typically the calls involved some ridiculous dispute between them, such as which one of them was better looking or how fast a C9000 Lightbender could go (the answer being 9000 Cepaks/minute), or—most recently—which of the brothers had a bigger penis, and he had forbade either of them to call him except in an emergency.

After a brief moment, the door hummed open, and Omaki and Aki stepped inside. The boy immediately began holding himself, jumping up and down. "I really have to go," he whined.

"That's why I told you to go before we left," the Blondie chided. "Why didn't you obey me?"

"I was too excited to go then."

Lord Ghan sighed.

"Good to see you, Omaki." Iason was sitting in his favorite chair by the window, his legs elegantly crossed.

"Iason. Forgive me, but it seems Aki is in need of your bath hall."

"Juthian," Iason commanded.

The youth immediately stepped forward to show Aki the way.

Iason smiled as the boy walked awkwardly down the hall, obviously quite uncomfortable. "He lacks some rather basic training," he observed.

"Don't judge him by that. He was excited about coming here. He can't relieve himself when he's excited. And he's walking like that partly because I had to spank him earlier."

"Oh? And what did he do this time?"

Omaki shook his head. "He disobeyed me and was loitering around the brothel. Then he lied to me about it."

"I see. Quite the naughty boy, then."

Now Lord Ghan grew serious. "Oh, no. Not really. That is, as he's gotten a bit older he's starting to develop more of a will of his own,

it's true. But in general he's a good boy, Iason. I'm sure he would mind you most of the time."

"I haven't made up my mind yet, if that's what you're getting at."

"No pressure. That's not why I've come."

"Can I offer you a drink, Omaki?"

"I'm not one to refuse a good drink. I'll take a scotch."

Iason rose to get the drink, but at that moment the medical team arrived. "Excuse me for a moment," he said, nodding to Omaki. "Sit down. Make yourself comfortable." The Blondie led the team to Daryl's room and then returned to find Lord Ghan still standing in the foyer.

"Sit down, I told you. Heavens! Why are you still standing here?"

"Iason. I need to talk to you...somewhere privately," Lord Ghan whispered. "Someplace where we can be absolutely certain we're not being overheard."

Iason studied him for a moment. The look in Omaki's eyes conveyed the urgency of his request and the full meaning behind his words. "Let me get you a drink, and we'll go up to the Observatory."

Omaki nodded, turning as he heard Aki shouting about feeding the fish. "He's rather taken with your fishpond," he apologized.

The Blondie smiled. "No need for apologies. He's like any other boy, I imagine." He handed Lord Ghan the scotch and they walked down the corridor to the hidden door and then made their way up the spiral staircase to the Observatory.

"Are you sure we're safe here?" Omaki asked in a low voice.

"I think so. Almost no one even knows about this place. It's not even in the blueprints for the penthouse."

"Then, I have something rather interesting to tell you." He leaned closer, instinctively whispering. "I have Yousi's logs."

For a moment, Iason simply stood, transfixed, as this information penetrated his consciousness. "You have them?"

Quietly, the Blondie pulled out a small, flat book from his pocket, holding it up with a smile.

"Where did you find this?"

"I didn't. It found *me*. It arrived via messenger capsule yesterday. Yousi was very clever; he anticipated that Jupiter might discover



© Yousi's Logs ©

Art by Tata





what he was up to and he somehow he—well, I'll just have you read what he says."

He opened to the first page and held up the book so Iason could read the message from Yousi.

Iason's eyes quickly passed over the words, though he could hardly believe what he read. He shook his head.

Lord Ghan smiled at his amazement. "It's almost as though he's alive again, coming at you through the page, isn't it?" He felt a twinge of sadness when he thought about what Jupiter had done to the brave, handsome Blondie whose intellect had once been the envy of all the Elite.

For a long moment, Omaki and Iason simply gazed at one another, bound together by the memory of their old friend and by the knowledge of what they now possessed.

"Have you read it?" Iason asked.

Omaki nodded. "But it's beyond me, to be honest. Although you might comprehend it. That is, I understand the basic idea of what he's suggesting, but I confess all that technical computer jargon is way out of my league."

"What do you suggest we do?"

"I'm giving this to you, Iason. I trust your judgment as to the next course of action. Although perhaps we ought to do what he suggests and just burn the thing."

Iason shook his head. "No."

"I leave it up to you, then. I'll follow your lead, whatever you decide. Yousi believed in you."

"Thank you, Omaki."

Lord Ghan placed his hand on Iason's shoulder, and Iason did likewise. For a long moment they exchanged a look of understanding and trust.

Then a sly grin crept onto Omaki's face. "So, you have your pet back, I hear? And when, might I ask, are you going to show him at a Pairing Party, Iason?"

Iason pulled away, frowning. "I hadn't thought about it."

"Well, you should. But surely you know this. Your persistence in keeping him all to yourself is partly what drives the rumors about

you two. Have him pair with some other pretty pet. You'd probably enjoy it—I know *I* would."

"Yes, yes." Iason was a little annoyed at being berated, having heard similar remarks from Raoul on numerous occasions. Yet he found that he had no desire whatsoever to show off Riki—certainly not to have him pair with another pet—preferring to keep the mongrel's charms for his own private enjoyment.

Omaki laughed softly, reading Iason's thoughts as if they had been clearly written on his face. "I suppose I understand how you feel. I'm not in a hurry to show my Enyu now, either."

"Are you pleased with him, then?" Iason asked, glad for the shift in the conversation.

"Oh...Iason." Lord Ghan shook his head and then laughed. "Oh my, yes. He's perfect."

The Blondie smiled slightly at this, wondering what sort of effect the new pet had on Omaki's untoward desires toward Aki.

The tiny, high-pitched voice of the boy suddenly drew closer, as Aki went searching through the penthouse for his Master. Juthian tried to stay him, but when Aki found the "secret" door open at the end of the great hall, he dashed toward it, excited. "A secret passageway!" he yelled.

"It's not secret anymore," Juthian remarked, smiling.

"Can I climb the curly stairs?" Aki pleaded.

"You'd better not."

"But I want to!" Aki pouted.

"No, we'd better wait for your Master."

"But they're probably up there! Master!" Aki called up the stairs.

"Hush," Juthian scolded him. "If they've gone up there, they probably don't want to be disturbed."

Aki looked disappointed. "Well, does he have any slides, then?"

Juthian shook his head. "No. Not that I know of."

"Not even *one* slide?" Aki asked incredulously.

The sound of the Blondies coming down the stairs diverted the boy's attention again. "Can I climb up the stairs?" he shouted, as Omaki emerged.

"No, Aki. We're going home now."

"But I *want to*." Aki stomped his foot angrily.

In a swift, firm movement, Omaki grabbed hold of Aki's arm, swatting his behind once with a rather hard spank.

"Ow!" Aki complained, rubbing himself.

"Behave. If I tell you no, it means *no*."

The boy sulked at this but fell silent, obeying his Master.

Though Iason remained expressionless during this interchange, he found the boy's naughty manner and pouting rather endearing. He had almost made up his mind to be Aki's Guardian, though he wanted to check a few points in the Code before he made his final decision. More than anything, he wondered how Riki would react to having the boy around and whether having to serve as an example would in any way modify or improve the mongrel's own behavior.

Lord Ghan nodded to him as he led Aki away. "We'll be in touch," he said, and then he left.

Iason sighed, sitting down in his favorite chair. "Where's Riki?"

Juthian stepped forward. "Master, I believe he said he wanted to take a hot bath."

The Blondie smiled at this, rising, and was just about to leave the hall to join his pet when Askel came on over the intercom.

"Headmaster Konami is here to see you, Sir."

Surprised, Iason went to the door, admitting Lord Sung himself. "Headmaster. Please, come in. To what do I owe the pleasure?"

"Iason," Konami nodded, stepping into the foyer.

"What can I get you to drink? Wine?"

"Nothing, please," the Headmaster replied. "I'm sorry to intrude. I just need a moment of your time."

"Of course. Please, sit down."

The stern Blondie followed Iason into the great hall, sitting next to him in one of the chairs by the fire.

"I'll get right to the point," he said, his voice low and serious. "You know Raoul, I believe, better than anyone. I want you to tell me if there's any truth to what I've been hearing lately."

Iason furrowed his brow, hesitating. "Forgive me," he whispered finally with a little laugh, "but it is hard for me to answer that, given the vagueness of your question."

The Headmaster looked a bit relieved, leaning back in his chair. "Ah. If you don't know immediately to what I refer, then I believe you've answered my question."

"Have I? But I don't even know what the question is, Headmaster," Iason protested.

"It is all foolishness; of that much I am certain. Blast that wretched Zanbar Su! Jupiter ought to outlaw the Channel once and for all. Do you listen to it? The Channel, I mean."

Iason shook his head. "I haven't the patience for it."

"Quite right. Yes, yes. I wish more Elites felt like you. And I should follow your example, I know. Although I confess, from time to time, I'm simply curious about what sort of thing is being talked about. I only listen, mind you, to ferret out potential mischief, especially regarding my students, but invariably I get sucked into the nonsense."

"Perhaps you could give me a hint as to what all this is about?"

Lord Sung crossed his legs, sighing. "It is a ridiculous rumor that's been circulating regarding Raoul and his attendant. I thought about going to see Raoul myself, but I'm glad now that I thought to speak with you first. No need getting him all worked up over the latest gossip."

"What sort of rumor?"

"Something along the lines of an unsanctioned restoration. I knew as soon as I heard it that it couldn't be true. Raoul would never defy Jupiter in such a manner. *You*, however, I sometimes wonder about," Konami replied, giving Iason a pointed look.

The Blondie paled a little at the Headmaster's reprimand, his heart beating a little faster. "Whatever do you mean?"

"Giving your pet a week of freedom and letting him go carousing about the streets of Midas just as he pleases! Haven't you any sense left in that head of yours?"

Relieved that the Headmaster was referring only to his letting Riki return to Ceres, Iason smiled slightly, settling back in his chair. "Riki...is not a typical pet. He needs a longer leash."

"You are quite right, he is *not* a typical pet," Konami replied. "Why you continue to keep him mystifies me."

Iason lowered his gaze for a moment before replying. "Jupiter has allowed me to keep him for another year."

The Headmaster looked extraordinarily relieved to hear this. "Ah, is that so? Very good, then. Well, I suppose if Jupiter approves, then I ought not give you grief about him." He smiled. "I should have known Jupiter would cave to your whims. She has always favored you, Iason, since you were just a boy."

Iason answered that with a slight smile, lifting his gaze to meet the Headmaster's.

Lord Sung laughed. "I confess I caved to your whims as well. I remember the way you used to go walking in the rain, no matter how often I threatened to punish you. I never could quite bring myself to turn you over my knee, as I probably should have."

"I remember a time over your knee," Iason replied softly.

"Hmmm? Ah yes, of course. You and Raoul. Mercy! The two of you put twenty years on me in a single term." He shook his head, as if lost in thought. "Ah, well."

Seeing the Headmaster's smile and the gentle look in his eyes, Iason felt overcome with a sense of affection for the great Blondie. He'd never really told Konami how much he meant to him, how much he looked up to him, and was about to say as much when the mantel clock in the great hall chimed the hour. Lord Sung rose. "Goodness! I've kept you longer than the moment I promised. I'll take my leave."

"You needn't go. Stay for dinner," Iason protested, rising.

The Headmaster raised his hand dismissively. "No, no, I won't take any more of your time."

"Stay awhile, Headmaster. You're always most welcome here. Let me at least offer you some tea." Iason followed the Blondie to the door, frowning. "Tai has made some delightful tea cakes; please, I insist you try one."

Konami turned and gazed steadily at him. "As gracious as ever, Iason," he whispered. "It is no wonder they say no one can resist your charms."

Iason felt his face grow warm at this compliment. "I am not merely being courteous. I truly would like you to stay."

“Some other time, then. I have another visit to make. More than one, actually.” He sighed and stood for a moment as if lost in thought and then shook his head, muttering something unintelligible as he left.

“Until then,” Iason whispered. He stood in the foyer for a moment after he departed, reflecting on how disappointed Headmaster Konami would be if he knew about what he and Omaki had discussed earlier. For a fleeting moment, he considered abandoning his design. How would he ever be able to face the Headmaster again?

At that moment, the medical team emerged from Daryl’s room, followed by Katze.

“Ah. How is he?” Iason asked, turning.

One of the medics shook his head. “It’s puzzling. According to his medical records he was discharged recently from Tanagura Medical.”

“Yes? So?”

“He should never have been released. His readings are all over the place. I’ve never seen anything like it.”

“He needs to go back to the hospital, then?” Katze asked, looking rather nervous.

“I’m not sure. He’s stable now. As to what’s going on, you need a physician’s opinion.”

Iason nodded and flipped open his handheld, immediately sending an outgoing to Heiku.

Lord Quiahtenon picked up, sounding a bit surprised to hear from him. “Iason. How’s that plate working out? No problems, I trust?”

“No, it merged flawlessly. That’s not why I’ve called. My attendant—Daryl—is ill. I’m a bit fuzzy on the details.”

“Is there a medic with him now?”

“Yes.”

“Let me talk to him.”

Iason handed the phone to the medic, who gave Heiku a rather long, unintelligible explanation.

“What did he say?” Katze asked nervously, looking to Iason.

“Katze, I barely spoke with him. He wanted to talk to the medic.”

Katze turned to the medic, trying to make sense of what he was

saying, but the man only seemed to be listing a series of numbers and unfamiliar words. But he could tell from the look on his face that the situation was far more serious than he had expected it to be when he initially asked for a medical team to examine Daryl. He was glad that he had gone to Iason, even though Daryl was now angry with him.

"Lord Quiahtenon wants to talk to you now," the medic announced, relinquishing the phone back to Iason.

"Daryl needs to come into the hospital," Heiku announced.

Iason frowned. "Tonight?"

"It can wait until morning, but he's going to need a new kidney, so he'll be in the hospital for a few days. Go ahead and keep the medics with him until I get there. I need to study his medical records, but frankly, I'm perplexed. If Yutaku had believed he needed a kidney transplant, he would have given him one when he was in the hospital before. I'll contact Yutaku and apprise him of the situation. He may pay you a visit yet tonight. I find it hard to believe Yutaku would make such an error, but there's no denying now that something is terribly wrong."

Iason nodded, glancing over at Katze, who was watching him intently, desperate to know what Heiku was saying. "I see."

"Make sure he doesn't eat or drink anything after nine o'clock tonight. He'll be prepped for surgery first thing tomorrow morning. Can you get here at seven?"

"Certainly. We'll be there."

"I'm showing Ima at the moment, but the Party's breaking up. I'll come by as soon as I can."

"Thank you, Heiku." Iason flipped his phone closed.

"So? What did he say?" Katze asked anxiously.

"Daryl needs to go in for surgery tomorrow."

"What does that mean? Is it serious?" Katze sounded frantic.

"Yes, I believe so." Iason replied. "However, he'll be in good hands, Katze."

"What's wrong with him?"

"Heiku wouldn't say precisely, without examining him. He's basing everything on the nephrology scan."



“He should come over here and examine him!” Katze exclaimed, rather loudly. “Or we should take him to the hospital now!”

“Calm down. Heiku doesn’t believe he’s in any danger for the night, although he is coming over soon to examine him. He’s also notifying Yutaku Iman about his condition. Daryl is scheduled the procedure for first thing tomorrow morning, so it’s going to be addressed promptly.”

“Procedure? It’s not a procedure! It’s a fucking surgery!”

“What are you all talking about?” Daryl called from his room down the hall, his voice trembling. “Katze?”

At this, Katze seemed to collect himself, retreating to Daryl’s room to comfort him and tell him the news.

“Excuse me, Master Iason, but Lord Sami is here to see you,” Juthian whispered, standing a little uncertainly by one of the immense marble pillars in the great hall. With all the excitement and shouting over Daryl’s condition, no one had noticed Askel’s announcement regarding Xian’s arrival over the intercom, and so Juthian had come over to notify Iason himself. He was so excited he could hardly speak, his heart pounding.

Iason sighed. “Send him in.”

“I’ll be with your attendant,” the medic announced, retreating to Daryl’s room.

Lord Sami entered the great hall but then stood in the foyer uncertainly, looking decidedly uneasy.

“Xian. Oh, dear,” Iason then remembered his promise to him, that the Blondie could take Enyu whenever he desired. “I’m sorry, Xian. I made a promise to you I cannot keep. I’ve given Enyu to Omaki Ghan.”

A strange look passed over Xian’s features, and he shook his head. “That’s not why I’ve come.”

“Juthian, bring Lord Sami a,” the Blondie paused, trying to remember, “cognac? Ambrosia?”

“Yes,” Xian smiled, pleased that Iason had remembered.

“Yes, Master Iason.”

As Juthian passed Xian in the foyer, they exchanged a look, much like the look that had passed between them when Juthian had

answered the door and found his former Master standing there, staring down at him. His hands trembled as he poured a cognac for Lord Sami, whose fingers brushed his as he took the glass from him, his touch rocketing through him like electricity.

"Come in, Xian. Please." Iason sighed, feeling suddenly rather tired from all the excitement of the day.

"I'm sorry to disturb you," Xian answered, noting the Blondie's mood with concern. The last thing he wanted to do was make his proposal when Iason was feeling annoyed.

"Don't mind me," Iason replied, smiling to reassure him as he situated himself in his favorite chair. "Now. Come sit down and tell me why you've come to see me."

Xian took a sip of his cognac as he sat, trying to muster up his courage. "You may not like what I have to say."

The Blondie studied him, decidedly unenthusiastic about the way the conversation was starting out. "Oh?"

"It's about Juthian."

Iason turned to the youth, who was watching this conversation anxiously. "Juthian, go to your room. We're not to be disturbed."

Disappointed, but not surprised, Juthian slipped away, finding a place just outside the hall where he could still eavesdrop.

At that moment, Riki sauntered into the great hall, his hands stuffed in his pockets. "What's going on? I heard shouting. Why—"

"You too, Riki. Go to your room."

"Why do I have to go to my room?" Riki demanded. "Anyway what's all the screaming about?"

"Riki," Iason sighed, exasperated, "just obey me for once."

"Can I have a cigarette at least?"

"Not now, pet."

"But—"

"Riki!" Losing all patience, the Blondie gave him a warning look that the mongrel had seen many times before—it was a look that meant any argument would bring swift and certain punishment.

The mongrel gave a loud sigh and then stormed out of the great hall, muttering to himself.

Iason turned to Xian and nodded. "Go on."

Lord Sami took a deep breath. "I was...hasty when I agreed to give Juthian to you. In fact, I'm not sure how to tell you this, but," he leaned closer, his voice lowering, "I've developed an attachment to him. I've come to ask you—no, to *beg* you—to let me have him back."

Iason shook his head in disbelief. First Omaki and Aki, and now Xian and Juthian? What was next—Raoul and Yui, as Headmaster Konami had hinted?

The Blondie's silence worried Lord Sami. "I know you're angry. You've just trained him. I'd be in your debt, Iason. I'd pay you whatever you ask."

"Do you realize how dangerous it is to come to me with this information?" Iason whispered.

"Yes."

"And yet you're willing to take that risk?"

"I am."

For a long moment, Iason studied him and then finally set his wine glass down.

"I will give Juthian back to you. But I shall consider you in my debt, Xian, and I will call upon you for your loyalty."

"My...loyalty?" Xian shook his head. "Of course. You have it. As I said, whatever you want, Iason. So, I can take Juthian home?"

"Yes."

"Now?"

"If it pleases you."

At this, Lord Sami drained his cognac, setting his glass down and then rising. "Then, I'll take my leave. Thank you, Iason."

The Blondie nodded slightly. "Juthian," he called.

The boy came running into the hall, looking first at Xian and then at Iason.

"You're going home with Lord Sami. He will be your Master again from now on."

The joy on the boy's face was so transparent, Iason wondered why he had never noticed the attachment before.

"Come, Juthian." Xian put his hand on the boy's shoulder, leading him from the penthouse, anxious to get the boy home and into his bed.

“Goodbye, Lord Mink,” Ju said, over his shoulder, smiling.

“Juthian,” Iason nodded. He was, in truth, more than a little sorry to see the boy go, not to mention a bit irritated. He had been a perfect attendant, and now Iason would have to go through the trouble of training another young boy. Yet this new development—this revealed relationship between Xian and Juthian—was, at the very least, intriguing.

Iason sat in the great hall for a few moments, pondering the events of the day and the surprising turn of events with the appearance of Yousi's logs. He reached into his pocket to retrieve the small book and, putting his spectacles back on, began to read.



STEPPING OUT OF IASON'S PENTHOUSE, Lord Sami walked quickly toward the elevator, and Juthian struggled to keep up with his pace. As soon as they reached the elevator and were safely inside, he turned, pushing Juthian against the car wall and kissing him wildly. “Ju,” he moaned. “I'm so ready for you.”

“Here, Master?” Juthian replied, a little nervously.

“No. This time I want to do things properly. I want to take you to my bed.”

At these words, Juthian began involuntarily to tremble. Xian immediately sensed his anxiety, pulling him close. “You're afraid, aren't you?”

“A little,” Juthian admitted.

“I'll go slow.”

Juthian nodded, excited, his head pressed against Lord Sami's chest where he could hear the Blondie's equally accelerated heartbeat. He could hardly believe what was happening and what was yet to come that very day. He closed his eyes, happy beyond his wildest dreams. His Master had come to bring him home.



RIKI LEFT THE GREAT HALL FEELING HURT and rejected. He was also rather irritated with Iason. After enjoying a week of complete freedom, he found the Blondie's demands and attitude insufferable, and the penthouse even more restrictive than ever.

What he wanted—and had *expected*—was to be petted and pampered and to enjoy a little time snuggled up on Iason's lap. Instead the Blondie acted as though he didn't even care that Riki was back in the penthouse. He hadn't come to join him in the bath, and then he had made him leave the great hall as soon as he walked into it, without even commenting on his new outfit. On top of everything else, Riki was desperate for a smoke.

As he passed Daryl's room, he stopped, attracted to all the activity there. The door was now open, and inside he saw several medics. Katze was sitting next to Daryl on the bed, trying to calm him down.

"But I don't want to go!" Daryl cried.

"Shhhh. It's going to be okay."

"It's *not* going to be okay! It's not!"

"What's going on?" Riki asked, frowning.

Katze turned to Riki, the worry in his eyes a bit alarming. "Daryl needs surgery."

"What?" Riki felt surprised at this news and a little annoyed with Iason for not telling him what was going on.

"He's getting a new kidney tomorrow morning at Tan Med."

"*Tomorrow?*" Riki started to comment and then saw the look of pure fear on Daryl's face. "Well...that's a really good hospital though, right? So everything should be fine."

"Tanagura Medical is the best facility in the Quadrant," one medic confirmed, smiling reassuringly.

Katze looked as relieved to hear this as Daryl did. "That's right. Everything's going to be fine, baby," he whispered, bending down to kiss his lover's face.

"But I'm scared," Daryl whimpered.

"I'm going to be with you."

"Let me know if...I can do anything," Riki said.

He backed away when no one answered him, realizing that the lovers most likely wanted to be left alone. So he continued on to his room where he waited for what seemed like an eternity, growing increasingly impatient when Iason failed to come to him or call him.

He paced through his suite, muttering to himself and feeling a bit neglected. Finally, he could wait no longer. It had been at least half an hour. He needed to smoke, and he didn't care what he had to do to get it.

He went back into the great hall, even more annoyed when he saw Iason simply sitting there, reading. Why hadn't he called for him after his guest had left?

"Iason, can I *please* have one extra smoke today?" he pleaded.

The Blondie actually jumped, startled, closing the book he was reading and slipping it into his pocket.

"Riki, I told you to go to your room."

"Why are you being so mean? I've been sitting there waiting for you practically forever. Anyway, about that smoke—"

"No, pet." Iason rose, picked up his wine and began walking toward the Library.

"Asshole," the mongrel muttered.

The Blondie stopped and then turned to look back at him, one hand on his hip. "What did you say?"

"Come on. *Please!* I'll suck you off extra-specially good later."

"I should hope you'd do that anyway," came the silky-smooth reply. Iason continued into the Library, and Riki followed, begging.

"Please? I'll let you spank me," he offered, desperate.

"You'll *let* me spank you?" Iason replied, amused. "And what makes you think I can't just spank you because it suits me?"

The mongrel fell silent, leaning against the doorframe to the Library as he watched Iason select a book and sit down in a chair. "But I...really, *really* need one."

"I said no, Riki," Iason said sharply and then added, mimicking what he had overheard Omaki say to Aki earlier, "When I say no, it means *no*."

Riki sighed, balancing his feet up on the doorframe so that he was suspended in midair.

“Stop doing that. You’ll get dirt on the doorframe.”

“My feet aren’t dirty.”

“Riki,” Iason sighed, putting his spectacles on.

At this, the mongrel jumped down, approaching him with a grin.

“Oh yeah. Fuck yeah.”

Iason looked up, puzzled, his brow furrowing.

Riki bit his knuckle. “Iason...you look *so cute* in those.”

The Blondie gave a dismissive laugh at this, opening a ponderously big book.

His pet moved behind him, lifting his hair to kiss the back of his neck. “What are you reading?”

“The General Code.”

Riki snorted at that. “I bet you come fast reading that.” He peered down at the page Iason had opened. “Guardianship. Why are you reading that?”

Iason shivered a little when the mongrel began kissing his neck, despite having climaxed just hours before. “Because I’m considering taking Aki as my charge.”

Riki let Iason’s hair fall, moving around to the front of the chair, and crouching down there. “Seriously?”

“Yes.”

“What does that mean exactly?”

“It means I’d be responsible for his well-being until he’s of age.”

“How long would that be?”

“Until he’s twelve.”

“How old is he now?”

“I believe he’s about to turn nine winters.”

“But,” Riki began tracing a line up Iason’s leg with his finger, “why do you want to do that? I thought he was Omaki’s pet?”

“He’s too young to be a pet. Jupiter insists he be removed from Omaki’s household.”

“That bitch.”

“Riki,” Iason scolded, although privately he was amused at the mongrel’s remark.

Riki slid a hand under his Master’s legs, so that it was sandwiched between his thighs. “Ooo...you’re warm here.”

Suddenly beset upon by a developing erection, Iason was forced to uncross his legs, and the mongrel delighted in his achievement, teasing him by running his hands up and down his thighs. "You're turned on again already? Wanna fuck me this time?"

For a moment Iason hesitated, but Riki was looking up at him so seductively he was seized with a strong desire to take his pet, right there. He closed the book with a thud, slamming it down on the table. "Take off your pants," he commanded.

Riki grinned, standing up to unzip himself slowly. "And if I give you what you want, will you give me what I want?"

"You're not getting any more smokes, Riki."

"Fuck!" Now the mongrel's hands moved to his hips, and he glared down at the Blondie. "Then you're not getting any of *this*."

"Ohhh," Iason laughed brokenly. "How *dare* you refuse me, pet."

"Sorry to interrupt," Odi said, standing at the door and trying to keep from smirking, "but I believe there's someone to see you, Sir."

Iason sighed. "Why don't we just have the Tanagura Freeway redirected through the penthouse," he replied, irritated.

Riki laughed at this. "That was...funny, Iason."

"Who is it?"

"Lord...Lord—I can't pronounce his name. The one with the robotic arm?"

"Ah. Yes. Heiku—have him come in."

Riki zipped up his pants, still snickering over Iason's little joke.

The Blondie smiled back, unable to resist the mongrel when he smiled so sweetly. He reached into his pocket and opened a silver case, removing one cigarette and holding it out between his fingers. "This one time only, Riki, you may have an additional smoke. But this is the **ONLY** time I will grant you this request. Understood?"

His pet's eyes shone with excitement and love. "Fuck yes!" He grabbed the smoke and then, rather impulsively, reached up and kissed Iason's cheek. "I love you forever," he announced, dashing off.

The Blondie watched him go, his heart bursting with love for him. Although he knew Riki had not meant the words in the sense he desperately longed for, just to hear him say "I love you" was enough to fill his heart to the brim. He suddenly realized that he had



not yet put Riki's pet ring on him, and he wondered how the mongrel would react when he did so.

Lord Quiahtenon was waiting in the foyer. He had his pet, Ima, on a leash.

"Forgive me, I was showing Ima at a Party so I brought her along. She won't be any trouble if I leave her in the great hall. She won't touch anything."

"That's quite all right. I'm sure she's well-behaved," Iason replied, giving the girl a slight glance and then a second, longer gaze. It was the female that Riki favored from the pet magazine, he remembered suddenly. She was very pretty, no question.

Heiku seemed to puff up upon apprehending Iason's notice of his new pet. "Yes, she's splendid, is she not?"

Ima batted her eyelashes at Iason, thrusting her chest up in a way that made her nipple ring swing a bit.

"Yes," the Blondie answered, frowning. He could not help but feel a bit jealous of the pet, hoping that Riki would not find her alone in the great hall.

"Is something wrong?" Heiku asked, feeling a bit perplexed at Iason's expression.

"No, no," Iason answered, breaking away his gaze. "I'm just thinking the poor thing will find it tedious sitting alone in the great hall. Perhaps she might like to visit my Library and choose a book?"

"Ah, wonderful! Did you hear that, Ima? Lord Mink has the best library in all of Tanagura. What an honor for you! Why don't you go and pick something out?"

Ima, possessing the mind of most Academy-bred females, became immediately excited at the word "Library," assuming it could only be like the Library at the Pet Academy—a place full of fashion magazines and other street literature as well as instructional books on sexual technique and coquetry.

"Yes, Master," she purred as Heiku released her from her chains and pointed out the Library to her.

Heiku then followed Iason to Daryl's room, smiling to himself and trying to suppress a laugh.

"Is something funny?" Iason asked.

“What? Oh, no, it’s nothing. Only...Omaki insinuated that my Ima wasn’t academically inclined. Ha! Omi is insufferable. Do you know he told me the most ridiculous rumor....”

Riki watched Iason and Heiku disappear down the hall and then, putting out his cigarette and carefully slipping it in his pocket to finish later, crept back into the penthouse from the balcony. He’d caught a glimpse of Ima as she’d entered the penthouse with her Master, and now he went off in search of her.

Even if he hadn’t been able to sniff her out—she wore a very distinctive, lovely perfume—he could *hear* her, for her chain jangled as she walked, and she wore a pretty little collar with bells. He came upon her in the Library, grinning when he saw her practically naked, frowning at the bookshelf.

“Don’t you ever get cold?” he asked.

Ima jumped, her eyes wide. “Riki! You bad boy! You scared me.”

“What are you doing?”

“Oh, looking for a stupid book. Master wants me to pick one. I thought there would be magazines and guides, but these are all boring textbooks or something.”

“Yeah,” Riki agreed, approaching her slowly. “I tried looking for something to read once but couldn’t find anything.” He eyed her figure, his cock springing to life. “You look *hot*, by the way. Damn. You’re so sexy...I love these thigh-high boots.”

Ima looked up at him, smiling. “You look sexy, too. I like your shirt.” She reached out and put a finger through the mesh in the tank, pulling it.

Riki grabbed her hand. “Naughty girl. You’ll stretch it.”

Ima giggled, pulling her hand away. She leaned back against a table, thrusting her chest up at him.

The mongrel smiled, eyeing her nipples. “You never came back like you promised.”

“I couldn’t. Master Heiku punished and wouldn’t let me go out the rest of the week.”

“Yeah? What did he do?”

“He spanked me with a ruler for being late that afternoon. See?” Ima turned around, showing him the bruises on her buttocks.

Riki felt like laughing. He could discern perhaps one or two darker areas that *might* indicate bruising. Obviously Ima had never had a taste of real discipline.

"Aw. Poor thing," he reached out and rubbed her soft skin, adjusting himself when his cock began to twitch. "Shit. I wish I could fuck you again."

Ima turned back around. "Umm...hey. Did you find my barrette? I think I took it out when I was in your room and left it there."

"No," Riki answered.

"Shoot. Master Heiku will be angry; he bought that especially for me. It has gamians in it and it's awfully expensive."

"Hmmm."

"Help me find a book, Riki," she whined. "I don't know what to pick. They all look boring."

"Pick something really hard, like this," Riki advised, pulling out a book on quantum relocation. "Then ask your Master to explain it to you. He'll get off on it, probably."

"Okay," she agreed, giggling. She took the book and held it to her chest, gazing up at the mongrel seductively.

"Ima, Ima," Riki sighed, spreading his legs and reaching out to touch her waist. "I really wish—"

"Riki!" Iason bellowed.

"Shit!" Riki started, dropping his hands.

Iason was at the mongrel's side in two steps, pulling him by the arm. "Pet, unless I specifically instruct you, you are NEVER to touch another pet!"

"We were just—"

Iason had no patience for the mongrel's explanations. He pulled him over to a chair in the Library and sat down.

"What are you doing?!" Riki hissed, mortified.

"What does it look like?" Iason snapped. "I'm *spanking* you."

"Not in front of *her*," the mongrel pleaded.

But the Blondie was not in the mood for argument. He turned his pet over his knee, pulling his pants down to his thighs while Ima looked on, her eyes wide, the book pressed against her mouth to cover her smile. It was all the girl could do to keep from giggling, for



© Spanked in Front of Ima ©

Art by Tata



she had never seen anything so funny as the sight of the infamous Riki the Dark being spanked like a schoolboy.

Riki bit his lip and used all his inner resources to keep from making a sound. He simply was not going to be humiliated any further in front of Ima. Iason gave him a series of very hard smacks, finally stopping when Heiku came to the Library door.

"What's this?" Heiku asked, looking at Ima suspiciously.

"I'm afraid I caught Riki touching your pet," Iason explained, setting the mongrel on his feet.

The Blondie looked decidedly displeased to hear this. "Oh? Come, Ima. We're going."

"I'll show you out," Iason replied, rising.

"She didn't do anything," Riki offered, following them.

Heiku led Ima through the great hall by the elbow, squeezing her arm a bit painfully. Ima gave Riki a parting smile over her shoulder, but Riki was wise enough not to smile back. He could tell that his Master was in a foul mood, despite his tone of civility with Heiku, and he could also see that Iason was watching his every move.

"Remember, Daryl is to have nothing to eat or drink after nine," Lord Quiahtenon repeated, turning to Iason. "But as I just said, he may move about freely tonight, as long as he doesn't overdo it. He'll be in bed for at least a week after the surgery so let him stretch his legs a bit now."

"I'll see to it," Iason replied. He accompanied them to the door and as soon as they had departed, he turned around to confront Riki, his arms across his chest.

"Fuck," the mongrel sighed.

## Iason's Decision

FOR A LONG MOMENT, IASON JUST STOOD in the foyer, staring at his pet. His expression left no question as to how angry he was.

"What? We were just talking," Riki protested.

"Just talking. I see." The Blondie let his arms drop to his sides as he began slowly approaching the mongrel.

Riki instinctively took a step back. "You already punished me," he pointed out hopefully.

"Is that your only concern, whether or not I'm going to punish you?" Iason demanded.

"Erm...." The mongrel glanced around the great hall, looking for the best avenue of escape.

"Don't think you're getting out of this discussion," Iason warned.

Riki, suddenly panicking, resorted to his favorite mongrel strategy and ran from the hall.

"Riki!" Iason took off after him but was momentarily delayed when he nearly collided with Katze, who was heading to the balcony for a smoke.

"Out of my way!" Iason snapped, sprinting past him.

"Holy shit," Katze murmured, nearly dropping his cigarette.

Riki darted into one of the empty suites, glancing back and realizing—too late—that Iason saw him. "Shit," he cursed. He attempted to jam the door panel by pushing random buttons and then ran into the bath hall, hiding in the shower.

Iason, despite his anger, couldn't help but smile at the mongrel's attempt to evade him. Overriding the door panel, he entered the suite and then entered his codes to lock the door.

He looked around the room and, determining the mongrel's likely hiding place, first poured himself a brandy. Then he sat in one of the chairs, crossing his legs in a leisurely fashion.

"Are you finished with your hiding game?" he asked finally. "I've locked the door—there's no escape. You might as well come out."

There was a slight rustling sound and then a loud thud as the mongrel knocked a shampoo bottle onto the shower floor. Then a muffled, "Fuck!"

Iason smiled at this, sipping his brandy. "Come out, pet. You do realize that the shower will automatically come on any moment?"

Almost immediately there was the sound of running water and a surprised yelp. Riki came out of the bath hall, frowning, his clothes dripping wet.

The Blondie laughed at his expression, his anger dissipating.

"These are my new clothes!" Riki complained.

"They are very nice. I meant to tell you as much. But take them off—I'll have Katze take them to the laundry."

"Don't bother Katze," Riki pleaded, stripping off his shirt. "He's worried about Daryl. Hey—why didn't you tell me Daryl was going to the hospital?"

"I only found out myself not long ago. I've been busy today, Riki."

"Yeah, I noticed," the mongrel sulked, pulling off his pants and kicking them aside.

Iason enjoyed the sight of his naked pet, still damp from his unexpected shower. "Come here, my love."

"But I'm still wet," Riki protested, though he felt relieved that Iason no longer seemed angry and found the Blondie's term of endearment reassuring.

"No matter. Come here."

Riki dutifully climbed onto his lap, his erection instantly springing to life.

"You ignored me all day," he muttered.

"I wasn't ignoring you. It's simply been one thing after another. Though I must confess, I wasn't very happy when I came into the Library and found you with Ima."

Riki looked away, feeling a little guilty.



Iason took hold of his chin, turning his head and forcing his attention. "Look at me."

"It didn't mean anything. I couldn't help it. I felt horny and she was half-naked and...I mean, come on! She's super pretty. Surely you can see that."

"She's an A-class pet, so yes, she is attractive," Iason agreed, "but you should know better than to touch another pet without my specific instruction."

Riki swallowed hard, wondering what Iason would do if he knew that he'd already done a good deal more than *touch* Ima. "It was just lust," he murmured.

The Blondie's expression clouded over at this, an unreadable look pressing into his features. "So, I take it you wouldn't protest if you were asked to pair with her?"

The mongrel wisely remained silent, unsure how to respond.

"You want to pair with her," Iason accused, his eyes darkening with jealousy.

"No," Riki replied quickly. "I've just been really horny all day. Like now." He pointed down at his erection. "It could have been anyone. There's nothing particular about her."

Although this was a lie, Riki was glad he told it, for Iason's expression softened instantly.

"Truly, Riki?"

"Yeah. Why? Are you *jealous*?" he teased.

Iason studied him intently for a moment. "Yes, I most certainly am jealous, Riki. I've told you this before: I want you all to myself."

"Don't you think it goes both ways?"

"What do you mean?"

"I mean....when I was gone, did you take Enyu?"

A smile tugged at Iason's lips, and his eyes shone softly. "But pet, you specifically *told* me to take Enyu if I needed to."

"I know," Riki sighed. "But I kinda hoped you wouldn't."

The Blondie laughed at this, his voice deep and rich. "You mean to tell me your offer wasn't genuine?"

"No, I meant it. It's just...well, what exactly did you do together?"

"Don't tell me *you're* jealous?" Iason nuzzled up against his neck.

"Ahh! That tickles! Plus it turns me on."

"I missed you so, Riki," Iason whispered.

"Are you going to answer me? About cat-boy?"

"Do you truly want me to tell you, pet?"

Riki sighed. "Not really, I guess. But...um, between cat-boy and me, which of us do you prefer in bed?"

"I prefer you," the Blondie answered, kissing his face and pulling him close. "And now, if we're discussing such matters, perhaps you'll tell me who *you* paired with during your week in Midas."

"Ha! Like I'd be stupid enough to tell you that."

Iason frowned. "How many partners did you have?"

"Again—not telling."

"I could *force* you to tell me."

"You won't. Because you don't really want to know, either."

The Blondie grew quiet, brooding over this.

Riki snuggled back against him. "Relax. Forget about all that. I prefer *you*."

Iason smiled, pleased. "Do you? Do you, Riki?"

"You're always doing that. I tell you something and you're like, 'Do you? Do you, pet?' Like I have to give additional confirmation for everything I tell you."

The Blondie made no answer, sliding his hand across the mongrel's thigh toward his erection.

"Take off your glove," Riki pleaded.

"Perhaps we should move to the bed."

At that moment there was a tentative knock at the door. "Sir?"

Iason sighed, exasperated. "What now?"

"Sorry to disturb you...again...but Lord Iman is here to see you," Odi announced.

"Ah, yes. Very good. I'll be right out. Go ahead and show him to Daryl's room."

"Yes, Sir."

"Who's Lord Iman? And does this mean we're not having sex?" Riki demanded.

"He's a physician and he's come to examine Daryl," Iason answered, rising.

Riki scrambled to his feet. “Thanks for practically dumping me on the floor! I hate when you do that! So we’re *not* having sex?”

“Later, my love.” Iason bent down and stroked the side of Riki’s face, leaning close to whisper, “Save it for me.”

“Yeah, okay,” Riki answered, realizing suddenly that without his pet ring, he had the option of *not* saving himself for Iason, if he so chose. The Blondie still hadn’t put his pet ring on, and he desperately hoped that somehow Iason would forget about it. After a week free of the torment and control of the cock-ring, Riki now dreaded its return. He was, in fact, a bit surprised that Iason hadn’t immediately slipped it on when he’d come to fetch him at Depravities. Perhaps the Blondie had forgotten to bring it. Or maybe he’d lost the ring!

The mongrel comforted himself with this last thought—more a fantasy than a realistic scenario, as he picked up his wet clothes and followed Iason out of the suite.

Lord Iman was just about to enter Daryl’s room when Iason hailed him. He turned, his serious expression shifting to a warm smile.

“Yutaku. Thank you for coming,” Iason said, walking toward him.

“Iason. It’s been a long time. Too long, in fact. Ah, you look very well. Very well, indeed.”

“As do you, old friend,” Iason replied, reaching out to rest his hand on his shoulder.

Yutaku did the same, and for a moment they embraced thus.

“I see you’ve relaxed your household dress code a bit,” he remarked, nodding toward Riki, who was wandering down the hall, completely naked.

Iason turned. “Riki! Put some clothes on this instant!”

“That’s what I’m *trying* to do,” the mongrel protested. “My clothes are in my room!”

“You could have thought to wrap a towel around you,” the Blondie scolded.

“You like me naked,” Riki replied, grinning impishly as he darted into his room.

“So, that must be your famous mongrel pet,” Yutaku remarked. “I confess, I can see the appeal.”

"Don't tell me you're finally interested in purchasing a pet? Shall I hold a private auction for you?"

"No, no," the Blondie protested, laughing. "You know my views on all that. I know you're Head of the Syndicate now, but I still stand firm in my belief that the pet system ought to be abolished. I find the very idea of pets simply unconscionable."

"So you'd send me packing, then?"

"Now, be fair. I have nothing against the Syndicate itself, only its involvement in the intergalactic slave trade. On Icaria—"

"Goodness. You don't mean to bore me with your famous Icarian speech, I hope?" Iason teased.

Yutaku laughed again, his eyes twinkling. "I will spare you the speech if you agree to stop trying to foist pets on me."

"Agreed. Though you ought to give me some credit. It was Raoul who always took issue with you on your views, not I."

"Yes, I remember." Yutaku shook his head, smiling slightly, and then his expression grew serious. "So, let's see this attendant of yours. Daryl, isn't it?"



ALTHOUGH HE HID IN HIS ROOM for a good hour, eventually Tai felt compelled to begin dinner preparations. He poked his head out into the hall to see if Odi was around, feeling unready to confront the virile bodyguard so soon after their unexpected hallway encounter. Encouraged by the deserted corridor, he made a dash for the back door to the kitchen, only to be intercepted by Katze, who turned the corner at precisely that instant.

Blushing furiously, Tai averted his gaze, nodding toward Katze in a way that left no mistaking his chagrin over their last meeting. He was mortified when it became apparent the auburn-haired youth intended to speak to him.

"Tai. Hold up a minute. I wanted to ask you something."

Tai paused, daring a sidelong glance at Katze, who offered him a reassuring smile.

"I was wondering if you knew anything about aphrodisiacs. I mean...for a eunuch. I heard about this special drink from Aristia."

Tai relaxed a little. "Oh, you mean Tarnacsian cider. Yes, it's true. It's made from a rare spice, Tarnacsia. It's only grown on Aristia."

At this, Katze looked disappointed. "Oh. I was hoping I could get my hands on some tonight. Daryl's a little pissed off at me about having to go back to the hospital."

"Hospital?" Tai frowned, having missed the medical team's visit when he was hiding in his room.

"Yes. He's going in tomorrow for a new kidney. Heiku says he can do whatever he wants tonight—within reason—so I was hoping to make things up to him."

"Heiku?"

"Ah, sorry. He's a Blondie. Heiku Quiahtenon, the Head of Tanagura Reconstruction. He just left."

"You're in luck. I brought many herbs and spices with me, including a tin of Tarnacsia."

Katze brightened. "Then, could you give me some? I'll pay you whatever you want."

"No need for that. But I can't just give it to you. I'll have to make the cider before it's of any use to you—though that's not a problem. But it needs to stew for a good hour before it's ready."

"Perfect. So, you don't mind making this for me? Does it actually work? I mean...would it work for Daryl?"

"I don't mind in the least. It's not difficult to make. When it's made right, it's a moderate aphrodisiac for a eunuch, though it's far too strong for an unmodified male, so don't be offering it to anyone else," Tai cautioned.

"I won't," Katze promised. "Thanks, Tai. I owe you."

"You can repay me," Tai replied, lowering his voice to a whisper, "by not spreading around what happened earlier today. In the kitchen, I mean. I'm...really rather mortified."

"Deal. I won't even tell Daryl."

Relieved, Tai nodded. "Thanks."

"Although you have nothing to be embarrassed about. I'm a bit envious of you, actually," Katze added, winking.

Blushing, Tai smiled shyly before backing away through the kitchen door. "Then, I'll get started on that cider."

Katze answered that with a little salute and a grin before turning away, thrilled to have something to cheer up Daryl, whom he knew would pout all night about not being able to use the G-wave devices. Perhaps it was a little sadistic to offer him an aphrodisiac when no consummation was possible, but Katze knew Daryl would nevertheless enjoy anything that gave him sensations he would not normally experience.

As he was heading back to Daryl's room, he nearly collided with Odi, who came around the corner from the great hall at precisely that moment.

"Holy shit," Katze gasped. "I seem to be running into everyone."

"My fault," Odi apologized. "I thought I heard Tai's voice."

"I was just talking to him. He's in the kitchen."

Odi, who had been impatiently waiting for Tai to emerge from his room, smiled at this information. "Katze. I've been meaning to ask you. I need to get a Class-9 Residual Tracer of some sort. I can't seem to locate one."

"Who makes it?"

"As far as I know they're only manufactured on Alpha Zen."

"That might be a problem. Everything's a little unpredictable now. We're hardly getting any shipments in from Alpha Zen. But the Trade Convention is next week, so hopefully all the problems will be sorted out soon. There should be quite a selection of merchandise at the convention as well."

"Next week?" Odi frowned. "I was hoping to acquire one sooner."

Katze shook his head. "I'll make some calls. But my guess is you'll have to wait."

Disappointed, the bodyguard fell silent. He wanted to check for residuals right away, and his inability to procure the right equipment was frustrating. Daryl's idea to check for a residual signature had been brilliant, and now Odi was annoyed that he couldn't immediately act on it. He sighed, putting a hand briefly on Katze's shoulder. "Thanks," he muttered, as he wandered off, deep in thought. Then he remembered that Askel and Freyn had some

connections on the border planets. It was unlikely, but possibly they had more access to Alpha Zen imports, or at least to the devices he wanted. So he went next to the penthouse entrance, where he found the brothers engaged in a typical argument.

"No, because yours is curved."

"So? That just provides better stimulation."

"You're delusional," Freyn replied.

"Odi!" Askel exclaimed. "You decide. Which of us has the most pleasure-giving penis?"

The bodyguard rolled his eyes. "I'm not getting involved in another one of your ridiculous disputes."

"Oh come on! You can be objective," Askel protested.

"To answer that question, I'd have to engage in sexual acts with both of you, and I'd sooner pair with a Galathian."

Askel pouted at this, offended, but Freyn laughed.

"Why doesn't he want to have sex with us?"

"Bloody hell. Quit pouting already. I wouldn't want to have sex with you either," Freyn remarked.

Askel smiled, arching a brow. "Too late, lover."

At this, Freyn blushed furiously.

Odi shook his head. "I don't want to know. Look. I came out here to ask if either of you could contact your connections on the border planets. See if you can locate a Class-9 Residual Tracer."

"Those are only made on Alpha Zen," Freyn replied.

Odi sighed. "I know. But I was hoping someone on the border planets might have one."

"I'll call around, but you'll probably have to wait until the Trade Convention next week."

With a curt nod, Odi turned and left the brothers, who immediately began arguing again.

"You didn't have to *tell* him," Freyn whispered.

"You should have seen the look on your face just now!"

"Oh come on! We were, what...thirteen?"

"Admit it. You liked it," Askel teased.

"In your dreams," Freyn snorted.

"*Oh Askel! Just like that!*"

"Hush, you moron!"

*"I'm gonna come! I'm gonna come! Oh!"*

"Shut the fuck up or I'll pound your face in!"

Askel laughed, punching his brother in the arm. "Admit it," he whispered, leaning over to kiss Freyn on the neck.

"Shit! Cut it out!" Freyn growled.

"Look at this!" Askel slid a hand up his brother's thigh to his bulging erection. "I still turn you on."

"You're sick." Freyn grabbed hold of his hand, pushing him away.

"Oh, *I'm* sick? You're the one with the bloody hard on!"

"Hush," Freyn snapped.

"Just wait until tonight. I'm gonna slide down under the covers and give you a lovely little blow job."

"Fuck." Freyn stood up, suddenly uncomfortably aroused. "I'm going to the can."

Askel laughed hysterically at this. "Oh fuck! I'm gonna die!"

Freyn scowled at his brother as he made his way into the penthouse, desperately hoping his erection would escape notice from the occupants within. No such luck.

Riki was ambling into the great hall just as Freyn was heading toward the bath hall, and the mongrel's eyes immediately gravitated to the bodyguard's immense bulge.

"Oh, Freyn. You look really...happy to see me," Riki teased.

"Fuck off," Freyn snapped.

"Riki," Iason scolded. "Come here."

"What? I wasn't doing anything." The mongrel strolled over to Iason's chair, leaning on the armrest.

"It is not polite to draw attention to potentially embarrassing matters," the Blondie said in a low voice.

"Yeah, okay. Hey, what did that doctor say about Daryl? Is he going to be okay?"

"He should be, after his surgery tomorrow."

Yutaku had been equally puzzled by Daryl's condition and had agreed with Heiku that at least one new kidney was necessary.

"So he's getting one right away—a kidney, I mean? I thought only Elites got to cut in line."



“Heiku informs me that there was a pileup on the Tanagura freeway earlier today, and they’ve already harvested the organs.”

“A pileup? How many vehicles?”

“I don’t recall. Ten or so.”

“Wow. That must have been a mess. It’s true what they say, then? If you die in Tanagura you get cut up?”

“If you mean that all organs are harvested, then yes.”

“That’s horrible,” Riki remarked.

“You ought to be glad of such a law, otherwise Daryl would be in serious jeopardy.”

“Yeah,” the mongrel conceded. “Still, that means if someone dies you don’t even get to say goodbye.”

“That is what the Memorial is for.”

“Yeah, but there’s no body. In Ceres we always get to say goodbye. I remember this one time—”

“Pet, can we discuss this later? I’m trying to read.”

Riki reacted to this by sitting completely on the armrest. “I can’t even say that you’re giving me another hard on, wearing those cute little spectacles?”

A slight smile played at Iason’s lips. “Riki,” he sighed.

“I’m totally serious! Wanna see?” The mongrel stood up and toyed with his zipper, grinning.

“Not now, love. I need to finish what I’m doing.”

Riki tilted his head, trying to see what his Master was reading. “You’re not reading that stupid General Code still, are you? And you’d rather read that than have some of *this*?”

The mongrel punctuated his comment by thrusting his pelvis forward, hands on his hips. He continued thrusting in an almost comical way, humming a bizarre little tune.

“Don’t worry, pet. I have plans for you yet today,” Iason replied.

“Oh, you have *plans*, do you? Well, I hope your plans don’t include fucking me. ’Cuz I’m too sore.”

“If my plans include ‘fucking’ you, then you will be most decidedly *fucked*,” Iason answered, turning his attention back to his book.

“Hey, until then, can I go swimming?”

“If you wear swimming trunks.”

"I don't have swimming trunks!"

"You have bottoms you can wear. What about those little black shorts, the ones you're always refusing to wear?"

Riki wrinkled his nose. "I still hate wearing those! They don't cover anything!"

"I don't understand you, pet. You complain about coverage, and yet you want to go swimming naked."

The mongrel, feeling trumped by this observation, fell silent for a moment. "Well, I suppose those *would* make good swimming trunks," he conceded.

"Be sure you dry off before you go prancing down the hall. The last thing I need is someone slipping and breaking their neck because you left a trail of water down the corridor."

"I don't go *prancing* anywhere," Riki muttered.

At that moment, an alert sounded from the communications center. Iason rose to answer it, nodding to Riki. "Use the indoor pool. It's getting a bit chilly now."

"Then why do you keep the outdoor pool full and heated?" Riki wondered aloud as he strolled off.

Iason went to the computer terminal, catching his breath when he saw the name on the incoming identification log.

Commander Voshka Khosi.

Slipping his spectacles off, the Blondie took a moment to compose himself before answering.

The face that filled the screen was nothing short of breathtaking: dark eyes, dark hair and smoldering sensuality. Iason saw the resemblance to Anori, but there was no question Voshka had a distinctive look, all his own.

"Iason Mink, I presume?" Voshka's voice was low and smooth, languidly confident.

"Commander Khosi?"

"Call me Vosh," Khosi replied, with a teasing smile. He gazed intently at Iason, his eyes sparkling with intelligence and humor. "Oh, my. My heart is pounding, here."

Unsure how to respond to this, Iason simply returned the smile. "An honor. How may I help you, Commander?"

"I see. Already you are toying with me, refusing my requests. Didn't I just tell you to call me Vosh?"

"My apologies," Iason laughed. "You have me at a disadvantage. I know you only by reputation, and yet you address me as though you already know me."

"Ah. I *do* know you. I have been asking everyone about the great Lord Mink, Head of the Syndicate. And yet, despite all the glowing descriptions of you, I find I am quite unprepared for your physical beauty. You are truly stunning, Iason."

The Blondie remained silent, feeling at a loss for words. Voshka stared back at him, eyes glimmering.

"I see it's true what they say. Blondies are shy when it comes to direct advances. Is it true you prefer to merely watch your pets pleasure one another?"

Again, Iason did not know how to respond and was relieved when the Commander continued.

"Although, I do have good reason to believe it is possible to seduce a Blondie. Perhaps you remember my brother, Anori? He was staying with you, I understand, when he died."

"Yes," Iason managed to reply, quickly donning some semblance of composure. "Of course I remember Anori. A tragic loss."

"Yes. A tragic loss indeed. But...my apologies. I'm digressing. Let me get to the purpose of my call. I have decided to attend the Trade Convention on Amoi next week. I think this is the best course of action to get the trade routes back up as quickly as possible."

"An excellent idea."

"I'm glad you approve. We will have quite a bit to discuss, you and I. I was wondering if you could advise me as to where I should stay."

Iason paused for a moment. The polite thing to do would be to invite the Commander to stay at the penthouse. In fact, there was no way to avoid the invitation without offending Khosi.

"The best hotel in Tanagura is the Denovian Royal. All the dignitaries stay there. It is armed by the Amoian Guard so offers outstanding security. The suites are truly breathtaking. But you are more than welcome to stay at my penthouse. It is not nearly as elegant as the Denovian, however."



© Commander Voshka Khosi ©

Art by Tata



Voshka leaned a little closer to the screen. "I was hoping you'd invite me, Iason. I'm very much looking forward to the chance to get to know you more intimately. I accept your invitation."

Struggling to hide his disappointment, Iason managed a gracious smile. "I'm honored, Commander. When might we expect you?"

"A week out from today. How much of my retinue might I bring?"

"I own 30 suites on this floor. Each can hold about four persons comfortably."

"Excellent. I'll bring 25 men."

Iason bowed his head. "As you wish."

"Oh my. You really are adorable," Voshka whispered. "Tell me, Iason, would you be that accommodating in bed?"

When Iason did not reply, the Commander laughed. "Forgive me, I've embarrassed you. I'm afraid I'm something of a barbarian, at least when it comes to carnal pleasures. Though I promise not to take you against your will."

Regaining his composure, Iason answered demurely, "Then, I'm in your debt." He looked up at Voshka, unconsciously batting his eyes.

"Oh, aren't you the little flirt? My, my. Anori was right—you Blondies *are* irresistible." His voice lowered again and he gazed at Iason seductively. "You've given me a glorious erection, just talking to you. Would you like to see it?"

"Thank you for the offer," Iason answered rather stiffly, "but I'm afraid I must decline."

"I see. Perhaps another time, then?"

Iason merely bowed his head again, averting his eyes.

"Oh...you're wickedly seductive," Voshka whispered. "I'd like to get my hands in that hair of yours, and then kiss that lovely neck—"

"We'll look forward to your arrival then," Iason interrupted, looking directly at him.

"I must say, I'm rather unused to being put off. You...intrigue me." Voshka began openly stroking himself, and though his maneuvers were not visible on screen, it was perfectly clear to the Blondie what he was doing.

Iason froze at this, once again completely at a loss for a response.

"Yes. I'm going to climax, just looking at your beautiful face."

"Please forgive me," Iason answered softly. "But I have another call coming in. It was a pleasure talking with you, and I look forward to your arrival."

Voshka laughed. "I've quite terrified you. How very rude of me. Very well. I'll spare you my perversions...this time. Thank you for the gracious invitation; I promise I shall try to behave. It will be difficult, I can tell you that. Never in my wildest dreams would I have imagined you would be so perfect."

Iason lowered his gaze and then braved a final look at the Commander. "Until we meet, then."

"Until then," Voshka replied, a roguish smile curling his lip.

Iason abruptly cut the transmission. He was shaking. He sat down, trying to calm down. Voshka Khosi was going to stay at the penthouse. And there was no question what the Commander had in mind. As if the Trade Convention itself weren't enough, now Iason would have to deal with Voshka's advances all week and the awkwardness of having to cater to the brother of Anori. He sighed, feeling the need for a drink.

A pleasant smell was emanating from the kitchen, and he gravitated there to see what it was. On the stove, a big pot of some sort of golden-amber liquid was stewing, emitting a heavenly, sweet aroma. Deciding to try some, Iason ladled a bit of the concoction into a cup and took a sip.

He closed his eyes, sighing. It was absolutely delicious and seemed to help calm his nerves. He drank several cupfuls of the mixture before Tai discovered him.

"Master!" Tai exclaimed.

Iason jumped, nearly spilling the cider. "You quite startled me," he scolded, his nerves on edge again.

"I am sorry, Master, but...*that*...what you're drinking, you shouldn't drink it!"

"Why ever not?"

"Because it's Tarnacsian cider! It's a very strong aphrodisiac, designed for eunuchs."

The Blondie smiled. "It's quite delicious, Tai. But you'd better check the recipe. I don't feel a thing."

"Yes, Master," Tai murmured, knowing full well that it would take a while for the Tarnacsia to have an effect.

"In fact, I'm tempted to borrow this recipe from you for the Trade Convention."

Tai was too worried about the effect the cider would have on the Blondie to even comment. He fervently hoped the concoction had not been simmering long enough to produce as strong an effect as he feared was possible.

"Oh, and...I want to see the menu for next week. A special guest will be staying with us. Commander Voshka Khosi from Alpha Zen. You've heard of him, I think."

Tai stared at the Blondie in disbelief. "You're joking."

"I assure you, Tai. I have no sense of humor when it comes to these matters."

"Commander Khosi is coming here? But...I haven't any idea what to make!"

"You have several days to prepare. Of course, spare no expense."

"I suppose I could make an Aristian pheasant roast. I've heard Alphazeniens enjoy game. And maybe a boiled lamb's head?"

"Both sound superb. But I want to see the menu before you purchase anything."

"Yes, Sir."

Iason retired to the great hall, pouring himself a glass of wine and putting on some relaxing music to soothe his nerves.

At first, the Blondie did begin to relax. But, as time passed, he became increasingly aware that something was happening to his body over which he seemed to have no control.

He was becoming decidedly aroused.

Cursing Tai's cider, Iason adjusted himself several times and then decided that he would have to find Riki to relieve his need.

As he made his way down the hall, he felt his desire increase exponentially, until it was almost unbearable. When he saw the trail of water leading to his pet's room, he quickened his pace.

He entered Riki's room, surprising the mongrel, who regarded him with wide eyes.

"Hey...what's up?"



“Didn’t I tell you to be sure and dry off, pet? There’s a trail of water down the hall.”

Riki shrugged. “How do you know it was *mine*?”

“Because it leads to *your door*. And since you disobeyed me, I think I shall have to paddle you.”

“What!”

Iason took in the mongrel’s wet body, his skin-tight, tiny bottoms clinging to his damp skin. “Or perhaps I’ll just take you, pet.”

Taking a few steps forward, the Blondie grabbed him, thrusting his tongue down his throat as he began running his hands wildly up and down his firm body.

“Holy fuck!” Riki gasped, when Iason broke away and began kissing his throat. “What got into you?”

“Pet,” Iason whispered urgently. “I need you. *Now*. Bend over that chair.”

“No fucking way! I’m too sore!”

“Riki! Are you resisting me again?”

“Yes, I’m resisting you! Let me suck you off or something!”

The Blondie stared down at him, eyes dark with lust. “When I tell you to do something, pet, *you’ll do it*. Bend over that chair.” Flipping him over, Iason proceeded to help him with this task.

“Okay, okay,” Riki grumbled. “Let me just slip these off, first.”

Iason paused, pleased that his pet had given in so quickly. He pulled off his gloves, letting his hands slide down Riki’s body to cup his bare ass as soon as it was revealed.

“Oh, pet,” he moaned, his arousal now almost painful. He started to unfasten his trousers, extraordinarily anxious for relief.

But as soon as the mongrel had kicked off his trunks, he suddenly darted off, gifting Iason with a parting grin before he bolted out the door and down the hall.

“Riki!”

Iason sprinted after him, catching up with his pet just as they reached the great hall. He grabbed him and picked him up, furious, carting him over to the dining table.

“Okay! Sheesh, can’t you take a joke? Ow! You’re holding me too tight! Cut it out already!”

“Hush, pet.”

With one sweep of his arm, Iason cleared the table, sending priceless Aristian crystal crashing to the floor of the great hall. Tai came running, as did Katze and Odi. The three of them watched in amazement as Iason proceeded to position Riki on his back, pinning his wrists to the table as he held his legs open with his arms.

Surprised, and a little alarmed, Riki looked up at him, puzzled. “What the fuck?!”

His Master silenced him with a kiss, releasing one of his wrists to unfasten his trousers and position himself for entry.

Riki used the opportunity to push against him with his free hand. “Dammit, Iason! I told you, I’m too sore!”

“Sorry, love,” the Blondie whispered. “I need to be inside you.” With that, he proceeded to penetrate, seizing Riki’s wrist and pinning him down again.

The mongrel howled his misery. “Bloody hell! Someone fucking kill me!”

“Oh, pet. You feel perfect.”

“Well, you feel like a big *horse* cock!”

At this, Katze struggled to suppress a laugh, motioning to the others to leave the hall so Master and pet could enjoy some privacy.

Iason began thrusting harder, groaning with each thrust. “Oh, yes. Yes, pet.” The soothing, elegant music playing in the hall seemed strangely incongruent with what was taking place on the dining table. Iason advanced to nothing short of a violent acquisition, taking Riki so hard that the table shook. He continued to groan and grunt, making all sorts of vocalizations that were atypical for the usually rather reserved Blondie.

Pouting, Riki refused to enjoy their congress, turning his head aside when Iason tried to kiss him again.

“Stop resisting me, pet,” Iason snapped.

“Why shouldn’t I resist! You don’t care how I feel at all!”

Iason nuzzled his neck, softening a bit. “I’ll attend to your needs later, I promise,” he whispered. He straightened up to reposition the mongrel, pulling him to the edge of the table and then pushing his legs back.

“Oh yeah? Will you do *anything* I want?” Riki gasped, staring up at Iason through half-closed lids. Though he was too proud to admit it, he was now starting to enjoy the sex, his breathing increasing until he was almost panting.

But Iason knew him so well that he could read the desire on his face and hear the pleasure in his breathing. “Riki,” he whispered, shivering. He closed his eyes as he shifted his position for deeper penetration. His pet felt so tight, so perfect, and Iason was so aroused he could hardly bear it. With a few final thrusts, he ejaculated, groaning and shuddering at the same time.

“That sort of *sounded* like a horse, too,” Riki remarked.

His senses slowly returning to him, the Blondie looked down at the mongrel who was staring up at him with a mischievous grin.

“So are you going to do anything I want now?”

“That depends on what it is you want to do, pet,” Iason replied, withdrawing slowly.

He released the mongrel, who winced a little as he sat up. “You really fucked me good that time,” he muttered. “So how about you let me tie you up?”

The Blondie sighed, still enjoying the aftereffects of his orgasm. “Very well.”

“For real?” Riki cried.

“But if you’re planning to torture me with some agenda of discipline, then no, pet.”

“Oh no, I just thought it would be kinky,” the mongrel answered with deliberate nonchalance. In fact, this was exactly what he had in mind, and he couldn’t wait to get the Blondie tied up and vulnerable and then discipline him thoroughly. Of course, he knew this meant he would have to endure Iason’s wrath afterwards, but since he was always being disciplined anyway, one more session didn’t much matter. “So, can we do that now?”

“Later, pet. After dinner.”

Riki peered at the broken glass that covered the floor. “Are you sure we’re still *having* dinner?”

“Tai,” Iason called.

“Yes, Master,” Tai answered, running into the hall.

"Clean up this mess. You can find more dishes in storage. Katze will show you where, if you don't already know."

"Yes, Sir."

"It appears you were right about that cider," Iason added.

"Yes, Sir. I'm sorry, Sir."

"What cider?" Riki demanded, moving to slide off the table.

Iason immediately stayed him. "No, love." In a fluid movement, the Blondie picked him up, carrying him across the great hall to the corridor, where he set him down gently. "You're barefoot."

"What cider?"

"Go get dressed, pet."

"Don't answer me then," the mongrel muttered, heading back to his room.

He felt a little mystified by Iason's behavior, but at the same time, he was thrilled that the Blondie was apparently gullible enough to let himself be tied up by his own, oft-punished pet. Riki knew this would be the only opportunity he would ever have to truly discipline Iason, and he was looking forward to really giving it to him. He shivered a little when he thought about what his own punishment would be for such an outrageous transgression, but he was convinced it would be worth it.

Iason retired with his book to the Library, hoping to finish reading the General Code before dinner. He was fairly certain that he would agree to be Aki's Guardian, but he felt compelled to read the entire section on Guardianship before he announced his intentions.

As Tai crouched down to pick up the pieces of broken glassware that covered the floor, he was joined by Katze and Odi, both of whom had come to help him.

"What the hell was that all about?" Katze whispered.

"Oh! Master Iason drank the *cider*!"

"Shit," Katze laughed. "So that's what it was."

"Cider?" Odi leaned closer, curious.

"Tai's making a special cider for me and Daryl. An aphrodisiac."

"It's only for eunuchs," Tai clarified.

"How disappointing. I'd like to try a cup of it."

Tai shook his head. "You'd better not."

"You have dinner to attend to," Odi remarked, reaching out to touch his wrist. "Go ahead, we'll take care of this."

"Are you sure?"

"Most definitely," Odi replied, giving him a suggestive look.

Startled when the bodyguard began stroking his wrist, Tai dropped the fragment he was holding. Odi used the opportunity to trace a finger down the palm of his hand. "I was hoping to talk to you," he added, his voice a little lower.

"Oh! Perhaps...after dinner?"

"It's a date. Come to my room."

Katze raised a brow at this, finally piecing together that something was going on between Odi and the Aristian.

"To your room?" Tai stuttered.

"Is that too fast for you? Very well. Why don't we go out to the gardens, then?"

"That would be nice." Tai offered him a slight smile.

Odi grinned. "You're absolutely adorable when you blush."

Tai pulled his hand away from his grasp, rising quickly. "I think something might be boiling over," he announced, darting off.

Katze regarded Odi suspiciously. "You're not out to corrupt that poor boy, I hope."

"How presumptuous. I'll have you know *he's* the one who's corrupted *me*."

Katze rolled his eyes. "Doubtful."

"You laugh, but this afternoon I found him in the corridor next to my room, jerking off."

The eunuch suppressed a smile, compelled by his earlier promise not to comment. "And I suppose you helped him out?"

"Of course. I didn't force myself on him, if that's what you mean."

"Hmmm."

"You wait. I'll wager he'll be begging me for more before the night's through."

"Maybe if he drinks some of that cider first," Katze snorted.

"What's going on?" Daryl stood at the edge of the great hall, peering down at them.

Katze leapt to his feet. "Daryl! Get your ass back in bed!"

"I'm not an invalid," Daryl protested. "And the doctors said I didn't have to stay in bed."

"And I say you need to rest. They don't know you like I do—I can tell you're tired."

"But what was all that commotion about? I heard a huge crash before. And," he eyed the broken dishes on the floor, his eyes widening, "what's all that glass?!"

"I'll tell you about it after you get back in bed."

"Do I have to eat dinner in bed too?"

"We'll see. Maybe you can eat at the table, if I think you look well enough," Katze replied.

"I'm fine," the grey-eyed youth grumbled.

"Hmmm." Katze picked him up and carried him to the bedroom.

"No, Katze," Daryl complained, though he couldn't help but admire his lover's bulging muscles. "Wow, you're really strong."

"You'd better remember that. These arms can love you, and these arms can punish you, if necessary."

"You wouldn't *really* punish me."

"I wouldn't test that if I were you."

Katze laid him down gently on the bed. "Now, you stay here. I have a surprise for you later."

"A surprise?"

"Yes. But you won't get it if you step foot out of that bed again."

"All right."

"Good." The auburn-haired youth leaned down and kissed his forehead. "Now, mind me. Rest."

Daryl smiled, wondering what his lover had in mind. He shut his eyes, finding that he was, after all, rather tired.

Katze stared down at him, concealing his worry with a smile.



LORD SAMI TURNED CONTINUALLY TO GAZE at Juthian throughout the entire trip to his villa—a lakefront home located on the outskirts of Midas by Lake Erphanes. His excitement was such that he found he

could not even speak, other than to whisper the boy's name every now and then.

He'd decided to take Juthian to his rarely used vacation home for this occasion, feeling uneasy about bringing him to his bed with Toma, his attendant, lurking in the house. Although Toma had served him faithfully, Xian knew he was also a shameless gossip. The last thing he needed was all of Eos talking about his relationship with Juthian or to hear some mention of it on the Channel. Although the villa was typically only used in the summer, it was cleaned and stocked every week for the rare occasion when it might be used.

An occasion such as this.

Juthian was flattered by his Master's attention, similarly at a loss for words. At one point, Xian reached over and placed his hand on the boy's thigh, stroking him with his thumb. With uncertain, trembling fingers, Juthian placed his hand over his Master's.

As they neared Ios Bridge, which led out of Tanagura and over Manatung Bay, the boy finally noticed they were heading towards the lake district.

"Are we going to the villa?"

"Yes."

"Oh."

The small word failed to convey Juthian's true feelings on the subject, for he adored the villa and was thrilled to be going there alone with his Lord Sami. He had fantasized about such a scenario many times. His only sorrow was that he was no longer physically equipped to enjoy the experience as he would have liked. But he couldn't wait to bring his Master pleasure.

And Lord Sami could hardly wait to be pleased. Anxious to commence with their special agenda, he began to drive a bit faster—too fast, in fact. His speedometer flashed as he passed the speed limit, triggering a reprimand.

"Xian Sami. You have exceeded speed protocols. A fine of 25000 credits has been deducted from your portfolio. Please reduce your velocity to a speed within accepted parameters immediately or your vehicle will be placed on automatic."

The Blondie swore, slowing down to just under the limit. Unable to help himself, Juthian giggled, having rarely heard his Master use any type of profanity.

"Oh, you find that amusing, do you?" Xian said with mock sternness, raising a brow.

Juthian nodded.

"Is that so? Shall I tell you what happens to naughty boys who laugh at their Masters?"

Juthian giggled again, enjoying his Master's playfulness.

"You laugh, but I guarantee you won't find it so amusing when I turn you over my knee for a good switching. I've heard Iason thrashes his pet, so I see no reason why I shouldn't do the same."

Juthian smiled, not wanting to correct his Master for referring to him as his pet. But if he wasn't a pet, what was he? He decided to brave a question.

"Master?"

"Yes, Ju?"

"Am I to be your attendant now?"

For a moment Lord Sami looked puzzled. Then, realizing why Juthian had asked, he fell silent, considering. "I haven't worked out all the details, Ju. I only know that I want you with me. But of course you know that we'll have to be very careful. That's why we're going to the villa tonight."

"I understand."

Juthian knew well Toma's proclivity for gossip. In his opinion, it was going to be impossible to hide the matter from the nosy attendant for long.

"In fact, I'm tempted to let Toma go," the Blondie continued. "Which is a shame. He's been an excellent attendant."

"Master Iason needs a new attendant," Juthian suggested.

"Juthian. That's a brilliant idea," Xian exclaimed. "I'll call him first thing tomorrow. But you're not to call Iason *Master* anymore."

"Yes, Master." Juthian was thrilled with Xian's possessiveness. He had only been addressing Iason with his formal title, a courtesy that was given any Blondie: Master or Sir—or sometimes, to show particular formality and deference—Lord. His thoughts drifted to



Toma, who he knew would be ecstatic over Xian's decision. The gossip-loving attendant practically worshipped Iason and had berated Juthian countless times for not seeming more excited about his new appointment at the Mink estate.

Not only that, but all the unusual activity in Iason's household would be devoured by Toma, who thrived on gossip. As Iason's attendant he would rival Ru and Sarius as a socialite, armed with Blondie intelligence from the Head of the Syndicate.

But Juthian also knew that the mere act of being sent to replace him after Juthian had returned to Master Xian would be open to countless speculations and theories. Toma was no idiot; soon enough he would piece together a theory that was close to the truth. Then it was just a matter of time before everyone in Eos knew.

Neither Juthian nor his Master seemed to consider the fact that it might not be in Iason's best interests to have a gossiping attendant.

"Don't be afraid," Xian whispered, reassuringly, mistaking his worried look. "I promise to be gentle." The vehicle slowed to a halt. "We're here."

Juthian found he was still trembling. Though he wanted nothing more than to be with his Master, his recent glimpse of Iason's genitals had him worried, given Katze's offhand remark that all Blondies were so endowed. Though he had, at times, managed to take a peek at Lord Sami's own package, his view was always restricted—usually by the Blondie's own hand—and he had no clear idea of his Master's true girth.

What if he was unable to please him? He knew how to perform for his Master, how to touch himself—at least when he still had something to touch—but what if he was disappointing when it came to pleasing the Blondie?

His thoughts drifted to that afternoon at the pavilion, and he derived some reassurance as he remembered how much Lord Sami had enjoyed his touch, however awkward and unskilled.

They got out of the vehicle, a cold wind chilling them both.

"It's going to snow," Xian remarked.

Without being told, Juthian ran ahead to open the door for his Master, as he always did, his signature unlocking the old-fashioned

wooden door with a welcoming chime. Inside it was chilly, as the heat had not been turned on.

Juthian shivered. "I'll start a fire," he announced, proud to show off his new skill to his Master. Katze had shown him how to light the fires in the Observatory and great hall, and though he had never had the opportunity to do so, now he was glad for the instruction.

"I'll start another one in the Master hearth. Come and join me when you're finished here."

Now that they were finally alone in the villa, Juthian found that he was terrified. He fussed over the fire, knowing he should get up and join his Master in the bedroom but finding that he could not.

He heard his Master approach and he froze, afraid to look up.

"You're quite finished, I think," Lord Sami remarked softly. "Are you avoiding me, Ju?"

"Yes, Master," he confessed.

"I see. Then I shall make things easier for you."

With that, the Blondie took two steps toward him and swept him up in his arms, carrying him easily to the bedroom, where he tossed him roughly on the bed. He stood, hands on his hips, looking at him sternly, though a smile tugged at his lips.

"Get undressed."

Obedying meekly, Juthian slowly undid the belt on his robe, letting the silken fabric slip from his shoulders. Xian watched him with glimmering eyes as he removed his gloves and shrugged off his own clothes—his boots first, then his tailed outer garment and finally his form-fitting bodysuit.

At last he stood completely naked, his taut muscles teased by the soft fall of his golden hair, a single slender braid running its length against the wild tangle of his tresses.

Juthian's eyes could not help but be drawn to the immense erection that greeted him from the Blondie's encouraging hand, and he shivered, alarmed. It was his first unrestricted view of his Master's organ, and now he was decidedly worried about their bedroom agenda.

Xian laughed softly. "I must say, you look rather unhappy, Ju. Am I that frightening to you?"

Juthian nodded, unable to speak.

The Blondie laughed again and then approached him slowly, crawling onto the bed as he gently pushed him back onto the soft, down-filled covers. He lay on top of the boy, his erection pressed against his stomach as he slowly prodded open his mouth with a unhurried kiss, his hands gliding the length of his lithe body.

His Master's kiss relaxed Juthian, who found himself going limp beneath him. In contrast, Xian became increasingly passionate. He murmured his name over and over as he alternated between kissing him and biting his throat, eliciting gasps of pleasure and pain from the boy.

"You excited me so much at the pavilion today," he whispered, rolling onto his back and forcing Juthian to straddle him. "Touch me, Ju."

"Where?"

"Everywhere."

With tentative, uncertain strokes, Juthian began running his hands down his Master's smooth chest, enjoying the silken softness of his long hair, which spilled over his body and onto the bed. He stopped just short of his Master's organ, hesitating.

The Blondie's cock twitched in response to his approach. Xian smiled, enjoying the teasing. "Lower," he ordered.

Juthian obeyed, taking hold of him with shaking fingers.

"Yes," Xian moaned, instinctively reaching out to place his hand over Juthian's to show him how he liked to be touched. "Like this."

The warmth of his Master's hand over his own was thrilling to the boy, and he offered Lord Sami a timid smile as he fondled him.

"Good boy," Xian whispered, closing his eyes for a moment. Then he slid his hands around to his ass and began squeezing and kneading him, his fingers sliding closer and closer to his portal.

Juthian gasped, instinctively leaning forward.

This movement excited Lord Sami, who mistook it as an invitation for deeper exploration. He reached over to the small table by the bed, dipping his fingers in a shallow bowl there.

Juthian shivered a little when he realized it was oil. His Master's look left no question as to what he had in mind.

Xian's hands slipped behind the boy again, one hand holding him apart as he slid a finger slowly inside him. "Look at me, Ju," he demanded when Juthian shut his eyes. "That's one finger." He thrust a few times, his eyes glimmering. Then he inserted a second. "That's two."

The Blondie became aware of Juthian's trembling and he watched him, fascinated, as he continued to explore him intimately.

"Now I want to be inside you."

Juthian shook his head, eyes flashing. "I'm not ready."

Aroused by his defiance, Xian suddenly picked him up by his hips and tossed him back onto the bed. Then he rolled onto his side, running his fingers up and down the boy's body in a teasing manner.

"Oh, but *I am*."

Juthian gasped when he paused at the hollow where his genitals once had been. An inexplicable look pressed into the Blondie's features, and the boy wondered what his Master was thinking.

In fact, Xian was quite angry with himself for agreeing to have Ju modified; it was yet another instance where his passions had gotten the better of his judgment. Juthian should have been intact for this, their first time together. Now he could not hope to offer the boy any real pleasure, or at least any sort of consummation.

But that did not change the fact that he was quite ready for consummation himself. He dipped his hand in the oil and began lubricating his organ, much to Juthian's horror.

"Please," Ju whimpered. "I...can't."

"Didn't I tell you what I would expect from you, Ju?" Xian scolded. "Now is not the time to change your mind about this."

"But," the boy eyed the immense erection, his voice shaking, "you're so big. As big as Master Iason!"

At this, Lord Sami's eyes narrowed, anger edging into his features. "How would you know that? And didn't I just tell you not to call him *Master Iason*?"

"Yes, Master," the youth murmured.

"Answer me, Juthian. How is it you can compare my size with Lord Mink's?"

"I saw him once. With Riki."

Visibly relaxing, Xian now cocked his head to the side as he continued lubricating himself suggestively. "So, you are frightened of me, is that it?"

Juthian nodded furiously. "Yes."

Lord Sami smiled slightly. "I will try to be easy on you. But there's no turning back now, Ju. I've quite made up my mind to have you." He leaned forward slightly, his eyes widening. "And that time is *now*."

Grabbing hold of Juthian's legs, he flipped him over onto his stomach, much to the boy's surprise. But then he paused, shocked, when he apprehended the deep whip marks on his back.

"Oh Ju," he sighed, one hand tracing a faint path down the arch of his back. "What have I done to you?"

Despite Juthian's scars, the Blondie was now quite aroused at the sight of him so vulnerably positioned. He pulled his hips back to his groin, pressing the tip of his organ up to Juthian's portal as he held his legs apart.

Frightened, the youth squirmed in his hands, trying to escape.

"Stop resisting me."

"No!"

"Ju!" Now a little annoyed, the Blondie repositioned him firmly, preparing to penetrate.

"Please! Just give me a few more minutes!"

Juthian wailed so pathetically that Lord Sami paused. Cursing, he released the boy, who looked behind him in surprise.

"Very well. I'll wait until you're ready," the Blondie sighed.

"Thank you, Master."

Xian nodded curtly, now rather painfully aroused.

"Shall I...pleasure you with my mouth?" Juthian offered, turning over and slinking toward him like an Aristian wildcat.

Lord Sami caught his breath as the boy, looking decidedly sexy and ready to please, approached him. He instinctively reached out to place a hand behind his head, urging him forward. "Good boy," he encouraged, as Juthian wrapped his fingers around his cock.

Though Ju had only paired with a few other pets, he had watched many others and had a good idea about how to pleasure his Master

in this manner. He knew that the Blondie would instruct him, if necessary. Juthian was quite happy—though a little surprised—that his Master had caved to his pleas, and he intended to make up for his disappointment however he could.

With deliberate provocation, Juthian slid his tongue slowly around the tip of the Blondie's massive organ, gazing up at him with wide eyes. Lord Sami sucked in his breath, shivering. As he continued, a low moan escaped from the Blondie, who, being both unaccustomed to direct stimulation and at the moment decidedly aroused, quickly realized that he would not last long.

Juthian paused, finally guessing the flavor of the oil that so liberally coated his Master's erection.

"Gardanian Cherry!" he exclaimed.

"Don't stop," Xian urged, pushing himself up to the boy's lips. "Open for me."

When Juthian opened his mouth to admit him, Xian began to pant. "Oh, Ju," he gasped, thrusting into the boy's mouth. Feeling unable to suppress his urge to release, he suddenly did so.

He groaned, shutting his eyes as his semen shot into the boy's throat. Juthian felt the hot, salty semen slide down his tongue and realized, with some surprise, that his Master had already ejaculated. After the Blondie released him, he looked up to find him staring down at him, a smile teasing his lips.

"That was sweet, Ju."

"I can do better if you show me how."

"It was quite perfect. Come here." The Blondie then pulled the boy to him and kissed the top of his head.

"Thank you for...before. For waiting," Juthian whispered.

Xian touched the boy's nose with his finger. "I'm not finished with you yet. I intend to take you later tonight, whether you're ready or not. It's only mid afternoon now."

"Yes, Master," Juthian murmured, snuggling close to the warm Blondie. He smiled.

"You probably should have let me have my way just now. Because now that I've spent myself once—no *twice*—today, I'll last much longer when I take you tonight."

Juthian had no reply to this, not caring to dwell on this revelation.

Lord Sami put his arms around him. "Tonight you're going to be mine...completely."

Juthian closed his eyes, sighing. Because his Master had given him more time to prepare for consummation, he now felt he could conquer his fear over what was coming. In his heart, he truly wanted to give himself completely to Lord Sami, for he knew that, in doing so, the Blondie would somehow also belong to him.



OMAKI PACED THROUGH HIS HOUSE, brooding. He was worried about what was to become of Aki. What if Iason refused to be his Guardian? He couldn't bear the thought of sending the boy back to the Orphanage. Part of him even considered fleeing Amoi, simply taking Aki and relocating to Aristia or Gardan.

Almost as if by some telepathy, an alert sounded at that moment: an incoming call...from Iason Mink.

Lord Ghan hurried to the terminal screen, hoping that the Blondie had finally come to a decision regarding the guardianship.

"Iason," he said breathlessly, sitting down at the terminal.

"Omaki. I thought you'd want to know I've made up my mind regarding your request."

Omaki took a deep breath, closing his eyes and then opening them again, nodding. "What is your decision?"

"I will be Aki's Guardian."

The anxious Blondie rewarded him with a heart-stopping smile. "Oh, Iason. I'm so relieved. Thank you. With all my heart, I thank you. I'm indebted to you."

"Perhaps you should hear my terms first."

"Your...terms?"

"Yes. I've decided that if he's to be my charge, I'll enroll him in the Elite Academy. That means I want him by the end of next week, in time to start the second term."

"By next week," Lord Ghan repeated, dismayed.

"Yes. I won't have him starting midway through the term. And, if you want my honest opinion, I think he would do well to be out of your care as soon as possible. I'm sure you understand my meaning, old friend."

"Yes," he agreed, feeling almost awed at Iason's uncanny perception. It was as though the Blondie could read his mind, or see into his heart.

"Now, one other thing." Iason paused for a moment, knowing that Omaki would not be happy with his next statement. "When he is of age, I want to give him the choice of continuing his education as an Elite rather than as a pet."

"But of course he'd rather be an Elite," Omaki exclaimed, alarmed. "That...that defeats the whole purpose!"

"Then send him back to the Midas Orphanage. You'll be assured of having him as a pet that way."

"Why can't he just transfer to the Pet Academy now, then?"

"Because, as you well know, the Pet Academy does not accept outsiders. All pets are bred and raised there. If you're going to have Aki as a pet, he'll be registered as an unclassified import, the same as Riki or Enyu."

Omaki fell silent. He knew that it would be much better for Aki to be with Iason than to be exposed to the threats of the infamous Midas Orphanage in Manatung, which was a rough place for any youth to grow up in. But what if Aki decided to remain an Elite? What if he did not want to be his pet? What would it be like for him, to grow up as an Elite and then become a pet?

"But...his hair," he pointed out finally, rather feebly.

"He'll be modified. Jupiter has already sanctioned it. His hair will be silver."

The Blondie sighed, closing his eyes. "Very well. I agree."

"Good. I think, to make the transition official and easier for Aki, we should have a party for him. I'm going to invite a select number of Elites to come. They'll bring gifts, of course."

"He'll like that."

"If we have the event next week, he can also meet my houseguest. I believe Aki is a fan of Commander Khosi, is he not?"



Omaki raised a brow, intrigued. “The Commander is staying with you? Oh, my. Yes, that will make quite an impression on him, I assure you.”

“Good. Then let’s say...on Jupiter’s Eve?”

“Fine. Do I need to do anything?”

“I’ll take care of all the arrangements. See you then.”

Lord Ghan nodded, but not before Iason cut off the transmission. The Blondie stared at the screen for a long time, feeling both relieved for Aki’s sake, and extraordinarily sad, for his own.

## Riki's Chance

THE DINNER CHIME SOUNDED, and immediately everyone in the Mink household gathered at the table in the great hall. Ever since Tai had come to the penthouse, meals were very rarely missed, for he was something of a wizard in the kitchen.

“Call in Askel and Freyn,” Iason ordered, sitting down at the head of the table. “They’ll eat with us tonight.”

“Yes, Sir,” Odi replied with a slight bow, wondering what the occasion was.

The brothers, who had been engaged in a contest to see which of them could hold their breath longer, ambled into the hall, looking surprised and a bit light-headed.

“You wanted us, Lord Mink?” Freyn asked.

“Yes. Sit down. There’s no reason why we can’t all eat here together at the table. You may take your meals with the rest of us from now on, unless I have guests or tell you otherwise.”

The brothers exchanged a look at this, delighted with the prospect of actually being able to eat at a table. Tai had already set the places for them and so they sat down, turning to Iason, who looked as though he had something more to say.

“I have several announcements,” the Blondie began and then stopped, taking a sip of his wine.

Everyone waited, though the aroma of the main course—a wild hen basted in its own juices—was disconcertingly tantalizing.

“First, you must all be prepared for a very important guest next week. Commander Khosi, of whom I’m sure you’ve all heard, will be staying at the penthouse throughout the Trade Convention.”

This announcement brought gapes of astonishment and a few gasps; Odi looked decidedly worried, as did the brothers.

"Yes, I see your concern," Iason remarked, nodding to Odi. "After dinner, we'll need to talk about security arrangements. He's bringing a personal retinue of 25 guards who will be staying on the floor. This, of course, presents something of a...problem, on a number of levels."

Odi shook his head. "This entire building will need additional security, as will the convention center. I don't mind telling you flat out that this is out of my league. A foreign dignitary of that stature...." He frowned, looking to Freyn, who seemed equally concerned.

"The Commander is bound to be a target, especially now," Freyn agreed, nodding.

"Not only that. With that many men, the Commander also poses a threat to *you*," Askel pointed out. "Although, he wouldn't have any reason to want to harm you."

Iason made no reply to this, lowering his gaze for a moment. "I will need to consult with Jupiter," he said finally.

The bodyguards all nodded in agreement.

"Who's this Commander Whatever-the-Fuck?" Riki finally asked, eyeing the roast impatiently. "And can we talk about him later? I'm starving to death here."

"Riki," Iason scolded.

"What?"

"You'll speak appropriately and respectfully or you'll be asked to leave the table."

The mongrel opened his mouth to speak again and then caught himself, letting his head fall back against his chair with a groan.

"Commander Khosi is the military hero who toppled the senate on Alpha Zen," Daryl whispered.

"Whatever. Like I fucking care," Riki whispered back.

"Are you two quite finished or shall we wait a bit longer?" Iason demanded, irritated.

"Sorry, Master," Daryl answered meekly.

Nodding almost imperceptibly, Iason continued. "Second. I have decided to become the Guardian of Aki, Lord Ghan's young charge.

To celebrate his arrival, I will be hosting a party for him next week on Jupiter's Eve. I expect all of you to be in attendance and to help with the arrangements."

Everyone fell silent at this, exchanging curious looks. A Guardianship was so unusual that most of them had never even heard of it. The thought of a small boy coming to live with Iason, in addition to Riki, was almost frightening.

"Third, as some of you already know, Juthian has returned to Xian Sami's household, per Lord Sami's request. I have not yet made arrangements for a new attendant," Iason looked toward Katze, who seemed rather stunned at this announcement, "but I am asking you to stay here, Katze, until someone suitable is found."

"Of course," Katze replied, puzzling over this news. Juthian had returned to his former Master? And Xian had actually come to Iason, asking to have him back?

"Finally, tomorrow Daryl will be going to Tanagura Medical for a new kidney. In the future, and this goes for everyone here, any medical issues are to be dealt with immediately. There is no excuse for hiding," Iason looked directly at Daryl, "a potentially serious problem that could easily be taken care of. I'll not have members of my household dying off from sheer stupidity. Tai, the food looks stupendous." He raised his wine glass. "Health and happiness."

"Health and happiness!" The others raised their glasses, smiling.

Katze and Tai both murmured private prayers, Tai bowing his head almost to his plate.

The table erupted in conversation and activity then, as always, though this particular dinner was especially festive given all the news that had just been delivered.

Katze leaned over to whisper in Daryl's ear. "You heard Iason. Sheer stupidity. I think you deserve a bit of punishment for that." He punctuated this with a slap to Daryl's rear, or as much as he could get at while the boy was sitting.

Daryl blushed.

"And I'm going to give it to you, too. Just as soon as you're all better," Katze promised.

"Who do you pray to, Tai?" Odi asked, curious.

"I pray to Armah, the One and All," Tai answered, touching his fingertips to his forehead ritualistically.

"God or goddess?"

"Neither...and both."

"Ah. An Aristian deity, I presume?"

Tai thought about this for a moment. "Not just Aristia. All That Is comes from Armah and there returns."

"Is this that one lady with the three breasts?" Askel asked.

"That's Astrajia, moron," Freyn retorted.

"Yeah," Riki agreed, his mouth full of food. "Katze has a statue of her in Daryl's room. What a body. I'd like to fuck her, three breasts and all."

Katze reached over and punched Riki in the arm, frowning. "Watch your mouth, dumbass."

Riki laughed, putting up his arms to ward off future assaults.

"Pet, how many times must I tell you not to talk with food in your mouth?" Iason reproached.

The mongrel sighed rather loudly.

"What's that? Did you have something you wanted to say, Riki?" the Blondie demanded.

"No, *Master*," he muttered, rolling his eyes.

The barest hint of a smile played on Iason's lips. "You're walking a very fine line, Riki."

"Yes, Master. Whatever you say, Master. Would you like me to lick your boot now, Master?"

The others struggled desperately not to laugh at this as Iason continued to stare at his pet.

"Yes, Riki. In fact, I'll have you do just that. Come over here and lick my boot."

"What! You can't be fucking serious!" Riki cried.

"You'll do as I say, or you'll take three strikes with my taming stick," Iason replied. "I'm waiting, pet."

Riki looked to Katze, as though hoping he might offer some help. Katze refused to return his gaze, continuing to stare at his dinner plate as though engrossed with his meal, though his lips trembled as he struggled to keep from laughing.

Slamming his napkin down on the table, Riki rose, and with transparent reluctance slowly walked over to Iason's chair and then fell dramatically to his knees, proffering the demanded tongue action on the Blondie's shiny white boot.

"Do you want me to ejaculate on your other boot, Master?" Riki purred sweetly.

Unable to contain himself, Katze burst out laughing, which set off everyone else, and the entire hall erupted in a fit of mirth. Iason's lovely laugh, like bells, floated above them all. Riki stood up and wiped his mouth, grinning at the Blondie, who stared back at him with shining eyes.

"Sit back down, pet, and finish your dinner," Iason said gently, rising. "Tai, I'll take tea, in the Observatory."

Tai rushed to take Iason's plate, eyeing it with concern. The food was hardly touched.

"The meal was not to your liking, Master?"

"The food is delicious. I simply have no appetite."

Riki took notice of this but said nothing. It was unusual for Iason to skip a meal, unless he was stressed over something. He watched the Blondie as he walked away, puzzling over this and wondering why he was going up to the Observatory.

"Holy shit," Katze gasped. "I wish I had a holoflic of that. You licking Iason's boot. Priceless."

"Fuck off," Riki grumbled.

"Would you *please* quit bouncing your leg like that," Askel snapped grumpily, scowling at his brother.

"I can't help it. I have nervous energy," Freyn replied.

"Yeah, but it makes the whole table shake. Look at my water. It shouldn't be jiggling like that."

"What the fuck difference does it make if your water jiggles?"

"It's making *me* nervous."

With an exasperated sigh, Freyn turned to Odi. "What are we going to do about this Commander deal?"

Odi shook his head. "Like I said, this is out of my league. I think we'll need to involve the Tanagura Police, and maybe the Midas Police as well. Or perhaps we can commission the Amoian Guard."

“Just get a bunch of those...robot thingies they have at the Midas auctions,” Riki suggested, biting into a roll.

“Yes,” Odi nodded. “That’s a good idea.”

“I can’t eat unless my water is level,” Askel complained.

“For crying out loud!” Freyn picked up Askel’s cup and drank its entire contents. “There! Your water is level now.”

“Now what am I going to drink?”

“If you two don’t bloody shut up—,” Odi began.

“Is something wrong with Master Iason?” Tai asked suddenly, having just returned from delivering his tea.

“What do you mean?” Katze demanded.

Riki sprung to his feet without waiting for an answer and dashed up the stairs to the Observatory.

Iason was sitting in a chair there, his head in his hands.

“Iason? Is it one of your headaches?” Riki whispered.

“Yes, pet.”

“Have you taken something for it?”

“Yes.”

Katze was at the door. “Anything I can do?”

“Let me take care of this,” Riki said.

“Another headache?”

“Yeah.”

“It’s chilly up here. I’ll start a fire,” Katze offered.

“Thanks.”

Riki went over to the chair and, pushing Iason’s hair aside, began massaging his shoulders. The Blondie sighed, letting his hands fall into his lap.

“That’s it. Just relax.” The mongrel worked his shoulders slowly, gently, shaking his head at the knots of tension he found. Iason was definitely worried about something. His eyes drifted over to the divan. “Doesn’t that thing over there transform into a bed?”

“Mmmm?”

Katze stood up, a fire now blazing in the hearth. “Yes, the control panel is on the arm.”

“Let’s get you into bed so I can give you a full body massage. Don’t you think that might help?”

"Yes, love," Iason conceded, grateful.

"Anything else I can do?" Katze asked.

Riki nodded. "Yeah. There's a bottle...next to my bed, of massage lotion. Can you bring it up here?"

The amber-eyed youth smiled. "Sure."

The mongrel walked over to the divan and pushed a few buttons on the arm panel. The furniture hummed softly and then almost seemed to fold up into the air, retracting as a bed emerged from a hidden compartment in the wall. He tore off the protective plastic covering the sheets and then helped Iason undress and lie on the bed.

Katze returned with the lotion, his eyes gravitating to the bed where the Blondie lay, facedown, his perfectly sculpted bottom framed by the silken trails of his long blond hair.

"See something you like?" Riki whispered.

Scowling, Katze handed him the lotion, but not before hitting him on the head with it.

"Careful. Or I'll tell Daryl," the mongrel teased.

"You wouldn't. Don't even joke about that."

Riki placed a hand reassuringly on his shoulder and then went over to the bed, undressing as he went.

Katze indulged in a final peek as he left, just as Riki turned to see if he was still watching. With a naughty smile, the mongrel blew him a kiss before straddling Iason. Katze flipped him off as he retreated down the stairs.

Iason sighed. The warmth of Riki's naked body on his lower back was comforting, for he knew what was coming.

"That's right. You just lie there and enjoy this," Riki whispered, moving Iason's hair off his back, and then squeezing a generous amount of lotion into his hands.

With slow, gentle strokes, he began applying the warming lotion to the Blondie's back, methodically working out his stiffened muscles. "You're tight tonight—more than usual, even. You must be...really worried about something."

The Blondie only responded to this with a moan.

"How does this feel?"

"Heavenly, pet."



The crackle of the fire, the mongrel's skilled hands, the warm lotion, and the release of the opiate all worked in concert to help relax Iason, whose mind had been full of a thousand different worries: Yousi's logs and what they implied, Commander Khosi's visit, memories of Anori's death, his decision to become Aki's Guardian, Xian's confession and request regarding Juthian, the upcoming Trade Convention, Jupiter's ultimatum regarding Riki, and countless other details that competed for his attention.

But Riki's soothing touch worked like magic. Gradually the pain began to leave him, the workings of his mind slowing a bit, and then a bit more, until finally he was in a state of blissful peace—a place beyond the cares of the world, somewhere adrift between awareness and dreams.

“Feeling better?”

Riki's voice seemed to be floating from afar and whether he was able to reply, to say that he was in the most perfect place possible, Iason did not know. He was too far removed from his own body to know if he had moved his mouth or if he had found the words to express his reply.

A low moan escaped the Blondie's lips. Riki smiled, continuing to massage every part of his body, and then, when Iason had fallen asleep, he crawled in bed next to him and simply lay there, brooding. What was causing Iason's headaches? Was it the Agatha? Stress? The Trade Convention that was coming? This...Commander? Riki found that he rather disliked being kept from his Master's thoughts and concerns. Iason always seemed to carry the weight of his problems alone, shutting out Riki and everyone else and retreating to some tortured, inner world. The Blondie was full of secrets, like a locked, ancient book with undecipherable script—even when open, impossible to fathom.

The mongrel sighed, closing his eyes. As he lay there, his heart and mind wrapped around Iason's mystery, an image began to form in his mind's eye, a rather indistinct face, and a single word.

*Anori.*

His heart pounding, Riki opened his eyes, just as Iason opened his. “Pet. That was...divine,” Iason whispered.

"Iason, who is Anori?"

Surprised, the Blondie simply stared at him, speechless. "Where did you hear that name?" he asked finally.

Riki pointed to his head. "Just now, in my mind. It came to me. Almost like a message."

Iason shook his head, smiling slightly.

"What is it?"

"I'm starting to think, pet, that perhaps there's something to these claims about Agatha."

Excited, Riki rolled onto his side, propping up on his elbow. "Why do you say that?"

"Because how else would that name have come to you?"

"And what is so significant about *that name*?" Riki pressed.

"It is the name of an Ambassador. He stayed here some twenty years ago. He died while visiting Amoi and while staying in my home. It is his brother, Voshka Khosi, who is coming next week."

"You mean that General you mentioned?"

"Yes, the Commander."

"Then...well, how did he die?" Riki asked, intrigued.

Iason looked away. "A crash. He was out in my hovercraft when a sudden windstorm sprung up."

Riki studied Iason for a long moment. It was the first time he had ever suspected Iason of lying to him. He wondered what other story lay tangled up with Anori, what it had to do with this Commander's visit, and why Iason was so worried.

"Are you going to tell me what's bothering you?"

Iason turned back to him, smiling. "I feel quite well now, thanks to you, pet."

"Iason, I wish," the mongrel began and then stopped, sighing.

"What do you wish, Riki?" Iason encouraged.

"I wish you would open up to me. Tell me what's weighing on your heart. You always keep everything locked up inside you. That's why you get these headaches, you know."

For a moment, Iason considered telling Riki everything. But he found that he couldn't. Some secrets were buried so deep, so twisted around his own heart that he felt he could not extricate them

without laying bare his innermost, private self. And when it came to his thoughts about Jupiter and Yousi's logs, he felt it was far too dangerous to share this information with a pet, especially a rebellious, unpredictable mongrel like Riki.

At least, not yet.

Iason smiled. "Don't tell me you're concerned about me?"

Riki snorted. "Of course I'm fucking concerned! These headaches—they're getting worse, aren't they? You told Daryl he was being stupid...I guess that doesn't apply to *you* though, huh? Don't you think you should see a doctor about it?"

"I intend to ask Heiku about it when we're at the hospital tomorrow. He might know a specialist of some kind. But...Riki, I've had various scans and tests done already. They say it's the poison. They can't find anything else wrong."

"Oh."

This was news to Riki; Iason hadn't told him he'd already been seeking medical treatment. The mongrel rolled onto his back, staring up at the stars that were just beginning to pierce the sky.

"What you need is a good slum doctor. They know all about Agatha from the gang wars."

Expecting Iason to immediately dismiss this, Riki was surprised when, instead, the Blondie nodded. "I'll talk to Katze about it and see what I can find out."

"But your headache's gone now, though, right?"

"Yes, my love. Quite gone."

Riki yawned. Something about the cozy fire, lying close to the Blondie, the stars overhead, and the comforting gurgle of the hot tub all worked together to make him feel suddenly extraordinarily *sleepy*. But he couldn't fall asleep yet; he was going to punish Iason tonight. Iason had promised.

He yawned again, resolving to stay awake just as he finally drifted off to sleep.



WHEN KATZE RETURNED TO THE DINNER TABLE, the others looked up with anticipation.

"So? Is he all right?" Daryl asked.

"He'll be okay. Riki's giving him a massage," Katze smiled.

"Good. Those seem to work for him."

"Does he get these headaches often?" Tai asked, concerned.

"Ever since he was poisoned with Agatha," Daryl answered.

"What's Agatha?"

"It's a drug that was used during the gang wars. It's rare that anyone survives it," Katze replied. "And those that do—"

"Are never quite the same," Askel finished melodramatically, widening his eyes.

The others laughed at this.

"Seriously, though, there are all sorts of strange rumors about it," Katze continued. "For instance, I've heard it does something to the mind and affects sleep."

Askel reached for another roll. "There was a story about one survivor who had visions. You know. Precognitions and all that."

Katze nodded. "Maylord. Last I heard he was living in Neal Darts. But from what I remember, his headaches got so bad, he stopped going out."

"But how'd he get out of Ceres?" Daryl asked.

The eunuch smiled. "Credits. For a while there, he was on an unbelievable winning streak at all the games. Eventually the club owners wouldn't let him in. They believed he had the ability to see the outcome of certain games."

Freyn snorted. "That's horseshit. No one can see the future. It's impossible. If it hasn't happened yet, there's nothing to see."

"I'm only telling you what the story is. Not that I believe it."

"You can't extrapolate something from nothing. It's the same reason time travel isn't possible. Time—"

"Bloody hell," Askel interrupted. "No one wants to hear your stupid time travel theories again."

"I'll have to agree with that," Odi nodded. "Let's get back to the security issue. I'm taking it, since Iason's out with a headache, we

won't be discussing this tonight with him. I liked Riki's idea. It wouldn't hurt to arm the entire building with automated units, in addition to armed guards and the police."

"Would anyone like dessert?" Tai asked.

Askel perked up at this. "I know I do! What is it tonight, Tai?"

"Aristian Honey Mallow Cake."

"Sounds delicious," Freyn proclaimed.

Everyone nodded in agreement.

"Tai, since you started cooking for us, I've had to swim an extra ten laps a day," Odi accused, his eyes shining.

"Your meals are amazing," Katze agreed.

Pleased, Tai blushed and bowed and then rushed off to retrieve the dessert.

Katze leaned toward Odi. "We all know why you've *really* been swimming those extra laps."

The others snickered at this.

"Yeah, Odi. Trying to look good for the Aristian," Askel teased.

"Apparently it's working. They have a date tonight."

"A date!" Askel cried, leaning forward eagerly.

"Isn't he a little young for you?" Freyn asked, smiling.

The bodyguard rolled his eyes. "We can't be more than six or seven years apart, at most."

"Yeah but, Odi, he's just a babe. He's probably not even developed yet," Askel pointed out.

"I don't know about that," Odi replied, trying to suppress a smile.

Katze grinned, but said nothing.

Askel reached for his glass to get a drink and, finding it empty, sighed. "Give me some of your drink, Freyn. You drank all of mine."

Freyn put his hand over his glass. "I don't want your amoebas."

"Amoebas? I don't have any amoebae, dumbass! Amoebae are in the ocean!"

At this, Katze started laughing hysterically, as did Askel.

Freyn blushed. "Germs, then."

"Fuck!" Askel was laughing so hard he was having trouble breathing. "You're ready to explain to us why time travel isn't possible—when you don't even know what amoebae are!"

Freyn punched him in the arm. "Shut up, moron! Who's the one who couldn't figure out the automatic soap dispenser? When it's bloody *automatic*!"

Askel quieted, frowning. "Yeah, but...it didn't have a label or anything," he protested.

"What, you need soap labeled to know it's soap?"

"You couldn't actually *see* the soap. All you could see was the dispenser. So I wasn't sure what it dispensed."

"Well what's *generally* dispensed from a sink in the bath hall? What else could you possibly think would come out?"

Askel answered that by ignoring him, reaching for his glass again. "Give me a drink, Freyn! I'm dying here!"

"No!"

"But you—"

"I swear by Jupiter, if you two don't shut the fuck up I'm going to have to start hurting people," Odi threatened.

Tai now arrived with the dessert and tea, putting an end to the dispute by pouring Askel the first cup of tea.

"Better watch out, Tai," Freyn whispered. "We heard Odi's out to take your virginity."

"Yeah, Tai. Whatever you do, don't let him get you anywhere *alone*," Askel advised.

Tai blushed furiously, averting his eyes.

"Fucking knock it off, both of you," Odi hissed. "I'm bloody serious this time!"

The brothers now observed Tai and, seeing his embarrassment, momentarily quieted.

"Mmmm. Delicious," Katze closed his eyes, enjoying his first bite of the sweet, honey-drenched cake. "Sit down, Tai, and join us."

"Yeah, Tai. And if you want, I'm sure Odi wouldn't mind if you sat on his lap," Askel piped.

Freyn snorted.

"I said bloody knock it off," the bodyguard growled, pointing his fork at Askel.

"Yeah, I wouldn't sit there *now*, if I were you," Freyn added.

The others snickered at this.

Odi glowered at Freyn, though he was rather mortified that his growing erection hadn't escaped general notice.

"Would anyone like milk in their tea?" Tai asked, looking both embarrassed and a little puzzled.

"That depends. Does it have any amoebae in it?" Askel quipped.

Freyn rolled his eyes as the table erupted in laughter again. "You just wait, brother."

"What's that supposed to mean?"

Daryl yawned, immediately drawing Katze's notice.

"Are you tired?" Without waiting for an answer, Katze rose. "Let's get you into bed."

"I've been in bed practically all day," Daryl complained, though he was, in fact, surprisingly weary.

"Up," Katze demanded, hands on his hips.

Reluctantly, but feeling a little flattered by his lover's attention to his every move, Daryl rose.

Katze swept him up into his arms, eliciting a squeal of delight from the weak boy. He turned to look at Tai. "Will that...*you know what*...keep for any length of time?"

Tai nodded. "It can last indefinitely if I freeze it."

"Good. Then do so. I think it'll have to wait."

"What are you talking about? What's he going to freeze?"

"Never you mind. Your little surprise—I've decided you're going to have to wait."

"Why?" Daryl was disappointed, having looked forward to Katze's surprise all afternoon. He was also a bit confused. What sort of surprise could be frozen?

"Because I said so," his lover replied, carrying him off to bed.

"Make sure you label that clearly when you put it in the freezer unit," Odi advised.

"What's everyone talking about?" Freyn demanded.

"Tai's cider. He made some of this special cider for Katze as a surprise for Daryl. It's an aphrodisiac for eunuchs. Only Lord Mink got into it and," Odi snorted, "all I can say is...poor Riki."

"Master Iason was so excited, he swept all the dishes off the dinner table and mounted Riki right there," Tai added.

"That crash! Yeah, we heard that," Freyn exclaimed. "I meant to ask about that but I forgot."

"It was fine Aristian crystal," Tai lamented, shaking his head.

"You mean those ones with the silver edges? I loved those," Askel remarked sadly.

Freyn seemed inordinately amused by this. "I never knew you had such a soft spot in your heart...for *dishes*, Askel. And what, might I ask, is your opinion on these dishes? Does this appeal to you, or do you prefer something more floral?"

"Piss off."

Tai rose to clear the table.

"I'll help you," Odi offered, rising.

"Thank you but...that's not necessary," Tai replied, looking a little nervous. He didn't like having anyone who wasn't a chef in his kitchen, not even Odi.

The bodyguard shrugged. "Whatever you say." He lowered his voice. "So...I'll meet you in the gardens...whenever you're through here. When do you think that might be?"

"At least an hour," Tai answered. After working all day, he was anxious to shower before socializing with the handsome bodyguard.

As he began cleaning up the evening meal, his heart began to pound. He found he was looking forward to their date. It was the first time since coming to the penthouse that he had any sort of real social event planned. Although it was only to meet Odi in the gardens, Tai was rather excited at the prospect and flattered that Odi had invited him.

He finished up in the kitchen as quickly as he could, anxious to get ready for the evening ahead.



OMAKI FOUND AKI PLAYING in his room, and for a moment he simply watched him from the door. The boy was humming a little tune as he positioned his toy soldiers throughout his room.

"Preparing for a big battle, Commander Aki?"



Aki turned and looked up at him, delighted with the new appellation. "Yes. I'm going to topple the Senate on Amoi."

"Ah, I see. Then I hate to spoil your plans with a bit of information for you, but Amoi does not have a Senate."

The boy looked surprised, staring at his armies with concern.

"No matter," Omaki said softly, crouching down next to him. "You can always *pretend* there is a Senate."

Happy with this solution, Aki picked up one of his horses and proceeded to make it gallop up the Blondie's leg.

"I have something rather important to talk to you about, Aki."

The boy's eyes widened. "What is it?" he asked, a little nervously.

Lord Ghan stood up and then sat down on Aki's bed, holding out his arms. "Come here."

Aki dutifully climbed up onto his lap.

"I suppose I should just come right out and say this. Aki, you should be honored. Iason Mink has decided that he will be your Guardian. So you will be going to live with him until you are of age."

Confused and horrified with this news, Aki struggled to fight back tears, desperate not to start crying again. "Is it because I'm so naughty?" he asked sadly.

"Oh, my little love." Omaki hugged him, kissing the top of his head. "No, Aki. In fact, it is because *I* am naughty. You see, I wanted you for my pet, and I intended to raise you myself. But that's not allowed. Jupiter is making me find another home for you until you are of age. So I asked Iason if he would be your Guardian, because I trust him more than anyone else I know to take good care of you. And he agreed."

"But...I don't want to leave you," Aki whimpered.

Lord Ghan closed his eyes, struggling with his own emotions. "I don't want you to go either, Aki. But we have no choice. Jupiter commands it."

"I *hate* Jupiter!"

Startled, the Blondie covered his mouth. "You must *never* say that, Aki," he scolded. "Do you understand? That is very dangerous."

"But Jupiter is making me go away!" Aki wailed, his voice muffled by Omaki's hand.

"Just for a few years. And Aki, I will come and see you all the time. Any time you want me to come."

"But...but," now Aki paused, trying to find the words to express the horror of this new development, "but he doesn't have *any* slides!"

The great Blondie threw back his head and laughed. "Well, perhaps he will build you one. Or you can ask if you can come back to visit me at the Tower."

Insufficiently consoled by this, the boy now looked decidedly depressed, staring vacantly ahead.

"Just think. Now you can feed the fish every day."

This revelation managed to produce a glimmer of interest in Aki's golden-brown eyes.

"Iason is going to give you a party to celebrate your coming into his household," Omaki continued.

Aki perked up a bit more. "A party?"

"Yes, a party." Lord Ghan leaned down to whisper in his ear. "With presents."

The boy smiled, starting to feel a little better about this rather alarming news.

"And...how could I forget? Iason may have a special guest when you arrive. Someone that *you*, Commander Aki, will be especially excited to meet. Who do you suppose that could be?"

"I don't know!" Aki yelled. "Who is it?"

The Blondie smiled. "Commander Khosi."

This information was almost too much for the poor boy to absorb. "Commander Khosi?!" he screamed.

"Hush, Aki. Yes. Commander Khosi. Iason seemed to think you might enjoy that. Was he right?"

"You mean I'm going to *meet*...Commander Khosi?" Aki repeated in disbelief.

"If all goes according to plan, then yes. The Commander is staying with Iason next week during the Trade Convention. So now you will get a chance to meet him and see his famous Alphazanian guards up close."

Aki's estimation of Iason Mink had risen tremendously with this revelation, and now the prospect of going to live with him seemed

almost bearable. In fact, in his heart, the boy was quite excited—at least about meeting the Commander.

“And you’ll...come and see me, whenever I want?”

“All the time. Iason will be quite tired of seeing me.”

Aki thought about this for a moment. “I’d still rather stay with you,” he said finally. As thrilled as he was about the prospect of meeting Commander Khosi, he would willingly sacrifice it just to stay with the Master he loved.

Omaki’s eyes shone. “Come now. You wouldn’t want to miss the chance to meet your hero, would you?”

Aki looked up at him with wide, tear-filled eyes. “But Master, *you’re* my hero, too.”

“Aki,” Lord Ghan sighed, his heart about to burst from love and sadness. He forced himself to smile again for the boy. “That’s very good of you to say. But, this will be better for you. You’ll be going to the Elite Academy. You might have a little catching up to do, and you’ll have to study a bit harder than you did with Ru. But it will be a good experience for you. Lots of parties and whatnot, I’m sure.”

Aki wasn’t at all thrilled with the prospect of going to the Elite Academy, instinctively feeling that, parties and whatnots aside, it could hardly compare to his current carefree existence in the Taming Tower. He scrunched his nose, eliciting a laugh from the Blondie.

“I take it you’re not as excited about going to the Academy? I suppose I can hardly blame you. I wasn’t much of a student, myself. I should warn you, Aki, to be on your best behavior. Headmaster Konami won’t hesitate to punish you if you misbehave.”

“Were you ever punished?” Aki asked.

“Oh yes. My, yes.” Omaki shook his head, remembering. “Many a time. I couldn’t seem to stay out of trouble. After each thrashing I’d swear to reform, but then some other temptation would pop up, some trick I couldn’t resist playing on someone, and then I’d be back in the Headmaster’s chambers again.”

Aki giggled at the thought of his Master being disciplined.

“Oh, you find that funny, do you?” the Blondie said with mock sternness, pushing him onto the bed and leaning down with his hands frozen in the air, poised to tickle him.

"No!" Aki screamed. "Don't tickle me!"

"Oh, but it's so hard to resist tickling little boys who look so cute when they scream."

"I can't help it if I'm cute! I'm not cute on purpose!"

"Oh, very well. Then I will have mercy on you...this time. So, my little love, I was wondering if you'd like to walk with me down to the Confectionary for some frozen creams?"

Aki leapt up, bouncing on the bed. "I'd love to!"

"I suspected as much. Then, go wash your face and put on your shoes. But first...give me a hug, my sweet one."

The boy threw himself into Omaki's arms, clinging to him. "I love you Master," he whispered. "And I will always *always* love you. No matter where I am."

Wrapping his arms around the boy's tiny form, Lord Ghan marveled over how he could feel so much love for someone so small. "And I will always love you, Aki," he replied, closing his eyes and wishing the moment would never end.



TAI STEPPED OUT ONTO THE BALCONY, zipping up his jacket. The night was cool, but not unpleasant. Stars already gleamed in the indigo sky, the twin moons waxing. Petals from the weeping cherry, planted out of season, whirled around him, seeming strangely out of place in the early winter breeze. It had snowed earlier that afternoon, but only briefly. Now the weather was clear again, as if not quite resigned to the changing season, clinging for a few last days to the remnants of autumn.

Odi had been waiting for some time, sitting on the stone bench near the fishpond. "Is this too cold for you?" he asked, as Tai approached him.

"I'll be fine. Although I admit I'm not accustomed to the cold," he replied with a smile.

"This is nothing. Wait until the dead of winter—that's when it gets so cold your thoughts start freezing together."

Tai shivered, not wanting to think about it. He was feeling dreadfully homesick for Aristia, especially now. He missed his daily swims in the ocean and the warm, idyllic weather.

He eyed the garden with concern. "What's going to happen to all this? Won't this weather kill the flowers?"

Odi considered the garden for a moment. "I remember Katze saying something about a retractable awning of some sort. He was telling Juthian that once it got cold enough, he'd have to be sure to release it."

Tai studied the sides of the penthouse. "Don't you think we ought to find that? These flowers," he pointed to a bed of drooping heads, "don't look too happy."

Odi shrugged. "I don't know where it is."

Tai caught sight of a small panel on a wall in one of the corners. "What about that?"

The bodyguard rose and they both went to examine it. It appeared to control the sprinkler system and the heating and pump system of the pond.

"Maybe this is it," Tai suggested, pointing to the Open/Closed switch on the panel, which was currently set to Open.

Odi raised a brow, his eyes twinkling. "Hmmm. But what if it does something else?"

"Then we'll just flip it back?"

"All right then. Here we go."

Odi flipped the switch. Immediately, with a loud hum, a transparent awning emerged from the top of the penthouse, curving slowly down to stop at the balcony ledge, where it sealed with a rather impressive hiss.

Tai smiled. "You can still see the stars through it...and the city, down below."

"Pretty cool, huh. Looks like we activated the heating system, too," Odi remarked, pointing to the blinking red light above the thermostat. "So it should start warming up soon."

"Good." The Aristian shivered again, unable to help himself.

"You're cold." Odi stepped behind him and put his arms around him. "How about I try to warm you up?"

His heart beating a little faster, Tai didn't resist Odi's advances, rather enjoying the closeness. And, with the handsome bodyguard behind him, he didn't have to look directly at him.

"You're still shivering," Odi whispered. "Or are you trembling?"

Swallowing, Tai made no reply.

Encouraged by his silence, the bodyguard began to move his hands down his body.

Tai gasped, feeling horribly conflicted. He rather liked the feel of Odi's hands on his body...but at the same time felt a little uncertain about what was happening so early into their date. He reached out and seized Odi's hand, staying him.

"I'm sorry. I'm moving too fast for you, aren't I?"

"Yes," Tai admitted.

"Then I'll stop," the bodyguard promised reluctantly, though he continued to stand behind him. "But I can hardly help myself. You turn me on something fierce." He pressed himself up against him. "Can you feel that?"

"Yes!" Tai cried, suddenly moving away.

"I've frightened you."

Tai shook his head, though he was, in fact, terrified.

"You...you're a *virgin*, aren't you?"

Ashamed, Tai bowed his head.

"That's nothing to be embarrassed about. In fact...that rather intrigues me." The bodyguard smiled, gesturing to the stone bench. "Why don't we sit down?"

Tai did so, grateful for Odi's understanding.

"So, Tai. Explain to me how someone as good-looking as you is still a virgin?"

Tai blushed, shaking his head. "I am not good-looking. But I am still a virgin because...for a long time, I was marked to be a priest in the temple of Armah. You cannot be a priest unless you come into service untouched."

"Ah, I see."

"But," Tai continued sadly, "I cannot be a priest."

"Why not?"

"Because...I love food too much."

Odi tried not to laugh at this, though he found the remark somehow comical. “Well, you certainly are an incredible chef.”

“Thank you. But a priest can have no attachments to pleasures of the body. His mind must be completely focused on Armah so that he can interpret His messages correctly. A priest only eats enough to stay alive.”

“I see. And perhaps you liked *other* pleasures too much, as well?” Odi asked with a knowing smile.

Blushing again, the Aristian closed his eyes. “Yes,” he whispered. “I enjoy...other things...far too much.”

“Well, Armah certainly didn’t equip you to be a priest,” the bodyguard remarked.

“Yes. But I was not always...like this. And I have wanted to be a priest since I was a little boy.”

“Ah. Then as you matured, you found your body had other ideas?”

Tai nodded. “I could not stop touching myself. But not only that...I was raised in the palace of Prince Ruu of Aristia, who is my cousin—”

“Wait. Your cousin is a prince? Doesn’t that make you...well, something? Royalty of some kind?”

“It made me Ruu’s chef,” Tai answered. “I am one of countless cousins. But I got to live in his palace, and I used to play in the kitchens. And then it turned out that I had a special gift when it came to food preparation.”

“I’ll say,” Odi laughed. “But this sounds more like you wanted to be a chef than a priest.”

Tai looked away, saying nothing. “My father....”

“Ah. I’m beginning to get the picture. Your father wanted you to be a priest, is that it?”

“Yes. I was pledged to Armah from birth.” He bowed his head. “I have failed and dishonored my family.”

The bodyguard was silent for a moment as he pieced together the entire story. “So, your father wanted you to be a priest. You really wanted to be a chef. Then...something happened?”

Tai nodded. “My father caught me one day. When I was...was,” now the Aristian paused, looking embarrassed.

"When you were engaged in autoerotic activities?" Odi guessed.

"Yes. He was so angry he sent me to Amoi for penance."

Odi threw his head back and laughed. "I see. So, Amoi is where they send Aristians for penance? It's that bad here, is it?"

"It is not nearly as bad as I feared. But it is cold."

"You're lucky he didn't send you to Alpha Zen, then."

"He threatened to, but I knew he wouldn't. Not with everything that was going on there, with the Commander and all."

"So, how does Iason's penthouse compare to the prince's palace?"

"It is different...as far as architecture and all, and of course it is not nearly as big, but it is just as comfortable. In fact, I rather prefer it here, because I have the entire kitchen to myself."

"Then, you've given up on being a priest, is that right?"

"Yes."

"Good." The bodyguard leaned forward, his intentions clear. "Do you want me to stop?"

Tai shook his head.

Slowly, Odi kissed the boy, his tongue exploring his mouth in languid circles as he ran his hand through Tai's soft, dark hair. The Aristian closed his eyes, submitting to the myriad sensations coursing through his body. It seemed as though time itself stopped and space dropped away—such was the power of that kiss.

Finally, Odi broke away. "Can I take you to my bed tonight?"

"I'm...I'm not ready yet," Tai apologized.

Odi closed his eyes, sighing. "All right. But I must confess, I'm about ready to burst."

Tai's gaze lowered to the bodyguard's impressive bulge. "Do you want me to...touch you?" he asked timidly.

A slow smile crept onto the bodyguard's face as he began unzipping his pants. "Yes. I very much want you to touch me, Tai." Revealing his immense, completely erect organ, Odi repositioned himself on the bench, spreading his legs a little more, as Tai tentatively reached out to fondle him.

Odi gasped, closing his eyes.

"That's good, Tai. Your hand is warm."

Swallowing, Tai adjusted himself as he continued to stroke him.



The bodyguard moaned, relishing his touch. The Aristian seemed to know exactly how to stroke him for maximum pleasure, which surprised him initially and then excited him.

“Yes,” he encouraged breathlessly. He reached out and pulled the boy close to kiss him again. “Don’t stop,” he whispered when Tai hesitated. He kissed him wildly, almost savagely. Breaking away, he threw his head back. “Keep going, Tai! I’m very close.”

Then the bodyguard arched his back and climaxed. His semen shot out in impressively long arcs, droplets raining down on the stone footpath below. Tai watched in amazement, eyes wide, feeling rather uncomfortably aroused.

“Mercy,” Odi whispered, shaking his head. “That was...amazing.” He turned to appraise Tai and, immediately noting his arousal, raised a brow. “Why don’t I do something to relieve *you*?”

“Well,” Tai said uncertainly, adjusting himself again.

“I know something you might like,” Odi continued, running his hand down Tai’s thigh to touch him. “How about I pleasure you with my mouth?”

Tai moaned, finding these words alone a source of arousal.

“Is that a yes?” Odi whispered, moving in front of him and crouching down. He waited for a moment, looking up at the dark-haired youth, the red highlights in Tai’s hair shining a deep auburn in the moonlight. “Unzip your pants, Tai.”

Tai hesitated, not sure if he wanted to move forward, but his body decided the matter for him. With trembling fingers he fumbled with his zipper, releasing his rather formidable erection, which twitched erratically.

Odi took him into his hand, and then with tantalizing lethargy, slowly swirled his tongue around the head of the boy’s cock.

“Oh!” Unaccustomed to the stimulation, Tai raised his hands, feeling he wanted to do something with them, and then, almost instinctively, he grabbed onto Odi’s head. He gasped as the bodyguard continued, ruthlessly taking him down a path of pleasure to a place he had never been before. His moans and rather strange body twitches were not lost on Odi, who was enjoying the Aristian’s reactions to his first session of fellatio.

Tai experienced pleasure he never even knew was possible. As he watched his length disappear into the bodyguard's mouth, he began to moan and gasp, his vocalizations increasing in frequency and urgency. Odi pleased him for a few more moments before Tai could no longer hold back.

"I'm...I'm...it's coming," he whispered, feeling almost panicked. "It's coming, Odi."

The bodyguard continued his descent; and then, with a deliberately slow suck, he withdrew as Tai ejaculated into his mouth. Without fully meaning to, Tai cried out loudly, his voice a strangled sex-cry as he attempted, rather unsuccessfully, to stifle his vocalization. Closing his eyes, the Aristian enjoyed what could only be described as the single most satisfying orgasm of his life. Masturbating was nothing compared to this; in that moment Tai realized exactly what he had been missing.

When he opened his eyes he saw that Odi was looking up at him, smiling as he wiped his mouth.

"It sounded like you enjoyed that," the bodyguard remarked, his eyes shining.

Tai nodded. "Oh yes. Very much."

Odi rose to sit beside him again on the bench. "That's just a taste of the pleasures we can share together, Tai," he whispered. "If you want to, that is."

Swallowing, Tai braved another look into the bodyguard's dark, mysterious eyes.

"You don't have to say anything. Just think about it. About what happened tonight. And what might happen...another night."

Odi leaned forward and kissed him on the cheek.

"You look so innocent, the way you're staring at me with those big wide eyes. I feel as though perhaps I am corrupting you. Did I...push you too fast tonight?"

"A little," Tai admitted. "But I wanted to. Though all this is very...new to me."

"Then, next time I'll try to let you take the reins. It won't be easy though." He growled, and then snapped his teeth together in a dramatic biting sound. "I want to eat you right up!"

Tai laughed at this, squealing a little as Odi grabbed him and bit his throat.

“Don’t eat me,” Tai begged in mock terror.

“Oh very well. If you insist. I’ll release you...*this* time.”

With that, Odi let him go, and the two young men headed back inside the penthouse, laughing and teasing one another like boys.



RIKI OPENED HIS EYES, SURPRISED to be staring up at a clear blue sky. He looked around, wondering why he was in the Observatory. Then he remembered that he had given Iason a massage for his headache. Afterwards they had snuggled together on the bed...and somehow he had fallen asleep.

And now it was already morning.

“Fuck.” He sat up. Iason had already risen, apparently. Pulling a sheet around his nakedness, the mongrel trudged down the stairs to find out what was going on.

Everyone was at breakfast, and his entrance brought snickers and giggles. His sheet was wrapped so haphazardly around him that his penis was in full view.

“Riki,” Iason scolded. “That’s hardly appropriate attire for breakfast. Go and change.”

“I didn’t want to put on yesterday’s clothes,” Riki protested.

“Go put on some fresh ones, then.”

“Can’t I have some coffee first?” he pleaded.

“Get dressed,” Iason repeated. “Or shall I use my taming stick?”

Riki sighed and began to move away when a thought occurred to him. “Hey! I didn’t finish all my smokes yesterday! I had two left; can I have them now?”

“No, pet. If you did not use them yesterday, they are forfeited.”

Riki stood still for a long moment, glaring at Iason, who gazed back at him steadily, a warning look in his eyes.

Although Riki longed to tell Iason exactly what he thought of being swindled out of two cigarettes, his backside was still sore and

he was rather unenthusiastic about more punishment. So, with uncharacteristic submission, he retired to his room to dress.

Iason watched him go, a little surprised, but pleased, that Riki had not made an issue about the smokes.

In fact, Riki was furious. And a bit depressed. If he'd forfeited his smokes by not using them, had he also forfeited his session with Iason? The mongrel was desperate to tie Iason up and punish him so severely the Blondie would be begging for mercy. Now he was afraid to even ask about it.

He stepped into the shower, trying to quell his anger. As the water poured down his body, he closed his eyes, imagining Iason tied to the bed, his body covered with the marks of discipline, crying out with every strike of the kasey-whip, and then the paddle, and then...the G-strap, and then....

*"Pet, please," Iason whispered. "Please stop."*

*"Why should I show you any mercy? You gave none to me," Riki replied, with a devilish smile, whipping his arm back to bring the G-strap down on his buttocks with a sharp crack.*

*"Please!"*

*"What did I tell you! Call me Master! I'm going to teach YOU what it means to be punished. Tonight you're MY pet."*

*Crack!*

*Iason cried out, his muscles stiffening. "Please...Master!"*

"Fuck yeah!" Riki cried, pumping himself faster, groaning as he felt his ascent.

Then he was there, his semen spraying against the shower wall, where it was quickly washed away.

Feeling a little better, he finished his shower and then dried off and dressed, arriving back at the breakfast table just as everyone was leaving.

"Go ahead and eat your breakfast, pet. We need to take Daryl to the hospital now."

"But I wanna go!" Riki cried.

"Very well. Find something to take with you, then. You can eat on the way."

Daryl was visibly shaking.

“Don’t be nervous,” Katze whispered. “It’ll be okay, love. Just wait and see.”

Daryl leaned back against his lover, who was standing behind him and holding him tight.

“Tai!” Riki whispered, panicked. “Is there any coffee left?”

“I’m sorry, Sir Riki,” Tai replied. “It is gone. It will take me a few minutes to make it.”

“We don’t have time to wait,” Iason said. “Let’s go.”

Riki was so annoyed about being deprived of his morning coffee he forgot to secure anything to take with him for breakfast, and only as they got into the vehicle did he realize this.

He sighed, his head falling back against the seat. He was famished and his head ached, not to mention his backside. The day was off to a rather inauspicious start.

Iason looked over at him. “What is it, pet?” he asked, concerned. “Are you ill?”

Riki shook his head, feeling disinclined to discuss the matter with him at the moment.

In the back seat, Katze had his arms around Daryl, whispering soothing encouragements into his ear. Poor Daryl was so frightened about the approaching surgery that he couldn’t stop shaking.

“You’re going to be fine,” Katze whispered.

“I received a call from Lord Sami this morning,” Iason announced. “He’s sending Toma to us to replace Juthian. He should be easy to train, Katze.”

Katze frowned at this. “You do realize he’s a notorious gossip.”

“Yes. There’s little I can do about that, other than punish him if I hear about it.”

“My understanding is he was punished plenty at the Sami estate, and that didn’t stop him.”

“Wonderful. Now we’ll have two members of the household completely unresponsive to discipline,” Iason sighed. He looked pointedly at Riki, who glowered back.

“You could always get a brand new attendant,” Katze suggested.

“We haven’t the time for the training. With the Commander coming next week, and Aki as well, I need someone who’s capable

and who can take charge of an eight-year old. Before serving Xian, Toma was apparently the eldest of a large family in Midas, managing six brothers and sisters.”

Riki found he was starting to feel a bit ill. He'd hardly had any dinner the night before, and then he'd been deprived of two smokes—from an already drastically reduced regimen. Then he'd had no coffee and no breakfast. At least Iason drove smoothly; Riki was grateful Katze wasn't driving. He wasn't able to keep his mind on the conversation, and as they approached the hospital, he was surprised when Iason grabbed his chin, demanding his attention.

“Are you going to answer me?” the Blondie demanded. “I asked if you were ill.”

“Just hungry.” Riki muttered.

“Didn't you bring something to eat?”

“No.”

“Didn't I tell you to do so?”

“Yes, but then I was bummed out when there was no coffee and...I forgot.”

Iason sighed. “We may well be at the hospital for a few hours. You're going to get very hungry.”

“Great,” Riki groaned, sliding down in his seat.

“I'm sure they have food there somewhere,” Katze said as Iason pulled to a stop in front of the hospital in the no-parking zone. “Let's get Daryl checked in, and then we'll take care of you.”

Feeling too queasy to reply, Riki only nodded. As he got out of the car, a cool, fresh breeze washed over him, making him feel a little better. The moment was ruined when he saw Iason approach him, pet chains in hand. Riki had failed to notice that the Blondie had brought the chains, as he'd put them in the back seat with Daryl's things.

He cursed silently but knew better than to resist. With annoying casualness, Iason cuffed him, chaining him to his own arm. Riki looked down as he walked, feeling humiliated. It seemed everyone was staring at them, and this wasn't just in the mongrel's mind. The Blondie so rarely brought his pet out into public, he always drew attention when he did so.

The four of them made their way inside the building. Riki's eyes immediately gravitated to the statue of Iason he knew would be there. As soon as the Blondie stepped into the building, he was fawned over, everyone calling out greetings to him.

Raising one hand as if to acknowledge all this attention with a single motion, Iason continued on to the elevator without stopping to talk to anyone.

They headed up to Reconstruction. The elevator made a stop on the way up, and the blue-haired lady—the one from the floor where Daryl had stayed previously—stepped in.

Katze poked Daryl in the side and the eunuch desperately tried not to laugh as the blue-haired lady looked at Iason and then, suddenly realizing who he was, straightened, looking rather excited.

"Oh! Lord Mink. I almost...didn't recognize you," she began. "You remember me, don't you?"

Annoyed, Iason managed to stifle a sigh as he directed his gaze to the female. A moment's consideration placed her, and he bowed graciously. "Of course, Madam. And how are you?"

"Goodness! I am...well, it's extraordinary to see you! Quite extraordinary! Of all the extraordinary things! I was just telling my friend, Zusa, of that extraordinary day when—"

"This is our floor," Iason interrupted, smooth as cream. "But it was so good to see you again."

With that, the Blondie exited the elevator as Daryl and Katze struggled to keep from laughing.

"He should have said it was *extraordinary* to see her again," Katze whispered, eliciting a loud giggle from Daryl.

Iason glanced back at them with a disapproving look on his face.

"Sorry, Master," Daryl said meekly.

Riki trudged along, rather put out. He now wished he'd chosen not to come to the hospital, if it meant he was going to be chained the whole time.

Heiku greeted them as they arrived, his prosthesis managing to capture the mongrel's interest. Riki was fascinated with the Blondie's bionic arm and the way its mechanical gears and wheels turned beneath the transparent shell covering his artificial limb.

Riki discovered he had just enough chain length to reach a comfortable-looking chair. He sat down, gazing at Heiku's prosthesis through half-closed eyes as he struggled to stay awake.

"Iason. Right on time. Now we'll have Daryl get prepared. We'll need to run a few quick scans."

"You're going to be okay," Katze promised, as Daryl was escorted to the examining room.

The boy looked behind him, frowning. "Katze," he whispered uncertainly, swallowing hard to keep from crying. He had a horrible feeling he would never see his lover again.

"They'll take good care of you."

Daryl was unable to smile when Katze blew him a final kiss.

"I'm in your debt, Heiku," Iason said.

"Yes I know. I'll remember that," the Blondie teased.

Iason's attention was diverted by a familiar low voice as Raoul walked into the waiting room, followed by Yui. "Why is Raoul here?" he wondered aloud.

Lord Quiahtenon leaned forward, his eyes shining mischievously. "Ah, did I fail to mention that he would be here? He's brought Yui in for a certain, shall we say, *procedure*."

Iason's eyes narrowed at this as he remembered Headmaster Konami's visit and his inquiries about Raoul. "What sort of procedure?" he demanded.

"Take a guess."

"Heiku! I'm in no mood for games."

"Oh, very well. I shall tell you. It's a *restoration*." This last word was whispered into the Blondie's ear.

"You can't be serious. I hope it's sanctioned."

"I must ask you to lower your voice, Iason. Because no, it is not."

"Are you out of your mind?" Iason whispered furiously. "Have you any idea what the punishment is for an unsanctioned restoration, Heiku?"

"Yes, yes, I'm well aware. We can discuss this another time."

"Heiku." Yutaku poked his head out from the examining room, frowning. "Might I have a moment?"

"Certainly."



Katze watched Heiku and Yutaku, feeling a rising sense of anxiety when he saw them standing together for a long moment in deep conversation. They seemed to be puzzling over a printout of what Katze could only presume was a scan of some sort.

After a few moments both physicians approached them. Heiku stood for a moment, as though unsure where to begin. Then he looked at Katze. "We've found a rather alarming level of G-residuals in his system. You wouldn't know anything about that, would you?"

Shocked, Katze's eyes widened. "Yes," he admitted. "We might have been...that is, we were using G-devices."

Heiku nodded. "I thought so."

"What's this?" Iason demanded.

"They're imports. Illegal, I might add—although admittedly they're very popular. They're used to produce an orgasm-like experience in castrated males."

"I see," Iason murmured, looking over at Katze.

"It explains his general deterioration," Yutaku remarked. "Unfortunately, it makes the outcome far more uncertain."

Katze paled at this, shaking his head. "I knew those were dangerous. This is my fault."

"Are you still proceeding with the surgery?" Iason asked.

"Yes. It should take about two hours. Then he'll be in recovery for a good seven hours before he wakes but that will only be for a few moments. It might be best if you simply plan on coming back later today."

Katze turned to Iason. "I want to stay," he pleaded.

"Me too," Riki added.

Iason sighed. "Very well. You may both stay. I'll come back around sundown to fetch Riki."

The Blondie released his arm cuff and handed it to Katze, his gaze moving to where Raoul and Yui stood in the waiting room.

"Stay here with Katze, pet," he ordered. Then he walked toward Lord Am.

The mongrel frowned. "Hey. What the hell is Raoul doing here?"

The eunuch raised his eyes to look at Lord Am. It was all he could do to keep from running over to him and giving him a good punch in

the stomach. After all, it was Raoul's fault Daryl was injured in the first place. The fact that the Blondie was having Yui restored helped diminish his anger a bit, though he knew, deep in his heart, he would never be able to forgive Raoul completely.

Riki was similarly rather put out to see his former tormentor, and he hated the fact that Iason had gone to talk to him.

"He's having Yui restored," Katze whispered.

"What does that mean...restored?"

"It means he'll be a man again."

"Seriously?"

"Yes. But you can't tell anyone."

"And Jupiter...is allowing this?"

"No. That's why you need to keep a tight lip about it. Heiku's really going out on a limb to do it."

"No shit?" Riki stared at the Blondie for a long moment. Something about Raoul seemed different. He couldn't quite put his finger on it. "Yeah, well...he's still an asshole."

Lord Am looked rather startled to see Iason and for a moment simply stood there, gaping at him as he approached.

"Raoul," Iason greeted softly. "Heiku just told me why you're here. I must confess, I hardly believe it."

"Yes," Raoul replied, his cheeks flushing scarlet. "I imagine you were surprised."

"Surprised...is not quite the word I'd use. More like astounded."

Iason's gaze shifted to Yui, who was scowling at him with unveiled jealousy.

The Blondie laughed softly. "I see. Then...it's all true."

"Iason," Lord Am began, and then, unable to decide what to say, fell silent.

"I wish you all the best," Iason said, his eyes glimmering. "Perhaps...you and I might understand one another a little better now, Raoul."

Hesitating for a moment, Raoul finally nodded. "Yes."

"I'm glad I saw you here. I'd like to invite you to a party next week, on Jupiter's Eve, for Aki, my new charge. I've decided to be his Guardian."

Looking rather puzzled at this, Raoul shook his head. "Aki...isn't that Omaki's pet?"

"He is too young to be a pet. Omaki asked me if I would take him after Jupiter demanded he let the boy go."

"I see."

"We'll also have a private pet auction, if you're interested. Jupiter's Eve at dusk. Bring Yui, if he's able," Iason added, his gaze pausing briefly on the boy's face. "Though I must say, he doesn't look too happy to see me."

Raoul frowned. "Yui," he scolded sharply.

Yui immediately put on a more agreeable, obedient face, bowing. "Forgive me, Master," he murmured.

Raoul offered a small smile of apology for Yui's behavior, which Iason dismissed with a slight laugh. "Then, until we next meet."

"Until then."

Iason, feeling strangely affected by his encounter with Raoul, simply left the building without saying goodbye to Katze or Riki.

Riki watched him leave, puzzled. "Is he coming back?"

Katze made no answer, staring down at the floor.

"Bloody hell. I can't believe he just left. I still haven't eaten anything or had coffee or," he realized suddenly with horror, "had any smokes! He left without giving me any smokes!"

"Well, there's probably a cafeteria or something. You can get some breakfast."

"Katze," Riki pleaded. "*Please* give me a smoke. You can tell Iason you did and he'll subtract it from my allowance."

"Well...I'm not supposed to give you smokes, but I suppose under the circumstances, if I tell him, it'd be okay."

"I love you forever," the mongrel replied, grabbing the proffered smoke from his hand.

"But you can't smoke that inside. You'll have to go outside."

"No problem. I'm going down now."

"Come right back," Katze warned. He felt distracted, hardly paying attention to what Riki was saying. Yutaku's remark that Daryl's outcome was far more uncertain kept playing over and over in his thoughts.

“Hey. Can I take these chains off, do you think? Since Iason’s not with us now?”

“Yeah, okay. Just leave the collar on, though.”

Thrilled to be relieved of the weight and humiliation of the chains, Riki headed toward the elevator.

“Riki,” Katze called after him. “Be sure you come right back. I’m trusting you.”

The mongrel answered this with a grin and a salute, thrilled to finally be getting his morning smoke. As soon as he was outside, he lit up, sighing as he enjoyed his first smoke since the previous afternoon. It wasn’t as good as Dark Baccalias, of course, but after hours of deprivation it seemed like the best smoke he’d ever had.

As he smoked, he noticed Zusa’s Coffee & Tea House across the street and decided to run there and get some coffee and something to eat. He finished his cigarette and then entered the shop, his eyes gravitating to the stand of Dark Baccalias.

Then he remembered that he still had the paper credits Iason had given him tucked away in the special concealed pocket of his snakeskin boot. There was nothing to stop him from buying a pack now; he wouldn’t have to use his credit portfolio, so perhaps Iason would never find out.

With trembling fingers, he bought three packs of smokes, a large coffee and a bag of cream-filled krevlians. The shopkeeper opened his mouth as if to protest his presence in his shop but then eyed his initialed collar and said nothing. Riki felt a little nervous about this; the merchant obviously knew he was not just any mongrel. He could only hope the shopkeeper would not remember or report his purchases should he ever run into Iason one day.

The moment he stepped back outside he lit up another smoke and then hid his contraband inside his jacket pocket. Of course, Iason would punish him if he discovered his infraction, but as soon as he felt the yudona—the active substance in Dark Baccalias—hit his system he didn’t care. It was worth it. He almost groaned, so lovely was the smoke.

“Out of my way, mongrel,” a female pet said, pushing past him.

“Fuck off,” he replied.

The pet stopped, putting her hand on her hip. "Excuse me?"

"You're excused."

"Do you know who my Master is?"

"Like I give a shit."

"My Master is Kobin Nu!"

"So?" Riki peered at the girl, frowning. "Hey, I remember you. You're that bitch Ima was with. *Jewel*."

"What did you just call me?" the pet gasped.

"I called you a bitch," he replied, taking a deep drag.

"Oh, you think you're so smart, Riki. Humph! Well maybe I'll just tell my Master about you and Ima. And my Master is good friends with Zanbar Su. He runs the Channel. You've heard of that, surely?"

Riki fell silent, his mind starting to reel. Of course he'd heard of the Channel—it was a gossip broadcast on an Independent frequency listened to by nearly everyone in Tanagura.

Jewel arched a brow, smiling. "So if I tell him, he'll tell Zanbar Su. And then everyone will know about you and Ima."

"Know what?" he challenged.

"Don't play innocent with me. I saw her get on your bike."

"So? I took her for a ride."

"Yes, she told me all about that *ride*."

Riki narrowed his eyes. "What, you'd rat on her, too? I thought she was your friend."

"Humph! Some friend. She dumped me just to spend an afternoon pairing with a mongrel."

"Don't tell," he pleaded. "You'll get both of us in trouble."

She tossed her head, her eyes glittering coldly. "Why shouldn't I?"

Riki sighed. "What do you want?"

"Get on your knees and *beg* me not to. Right here in the street. Say you're a worthless mongrel and then kiss my feet."

"Fuck you," he answered.

"Fine. I'm telling, then." She stuck her nose up in the air, turned, and walked away.

For a moment Riki contemplated running after her and humiliating himself before her as she'd asked. But he couldn't bring himself to do it. It was bad enough he had licked Iason's boot the

night before. Had he really sunk so low that he'd get on his knees to plead with some female pet and kiss *her* feet?

But when Iason found out about Ima, Riki *knew* he'd be furious. It wouldn't matter that the Blondie had given him a week of freedom to do whatever he'd wanted. Riki knew that offer didn't include sexual congress with another pet.

Especially Ima.

Iason would be angry and—of course—Riki would once again be punished. The mongrel sighed again as he waited to cross the street when a thought occurred to him.

A wonderful, amazing thought.

*He was not wearing his pet ring.* Without his ring, there would be no way to trace him!

His heart pounding, Riki turned and began walking away from the hospital. He didn't know exactly where he was going or what he was doing. He only knew that, for the first time since coming to Eos, he had a real opportunity to escape his life as the sex slave of Iason Mink, to escape the constant punishment of a Blondie intent on taming that which could never be tamed.

To once again truly be free.

To be Continued...in Taming Riki Vol. 1, Part III



An *Expanded* Guide to Kira Takenouchi's  
**Taming Riki**

*With Illustrations by Ulla Nissinen*





## ❖ Characters ❖

### The House of Mink

#### **Iason Mink**

A Blondie, Iason is Head of the Syndicate, reporting directly to Jupiter.

At the helm of Tanagura's prosperous trade enterprise, the Syndicate, Iason supervises the export of pets to the border planets and beyond and oversees the pet auctions on Amoi. He is the Prefect of Eos and also manages the underground Black Market serving Ceres—the slum area of Midas where non-citizens (mongrels) reside.



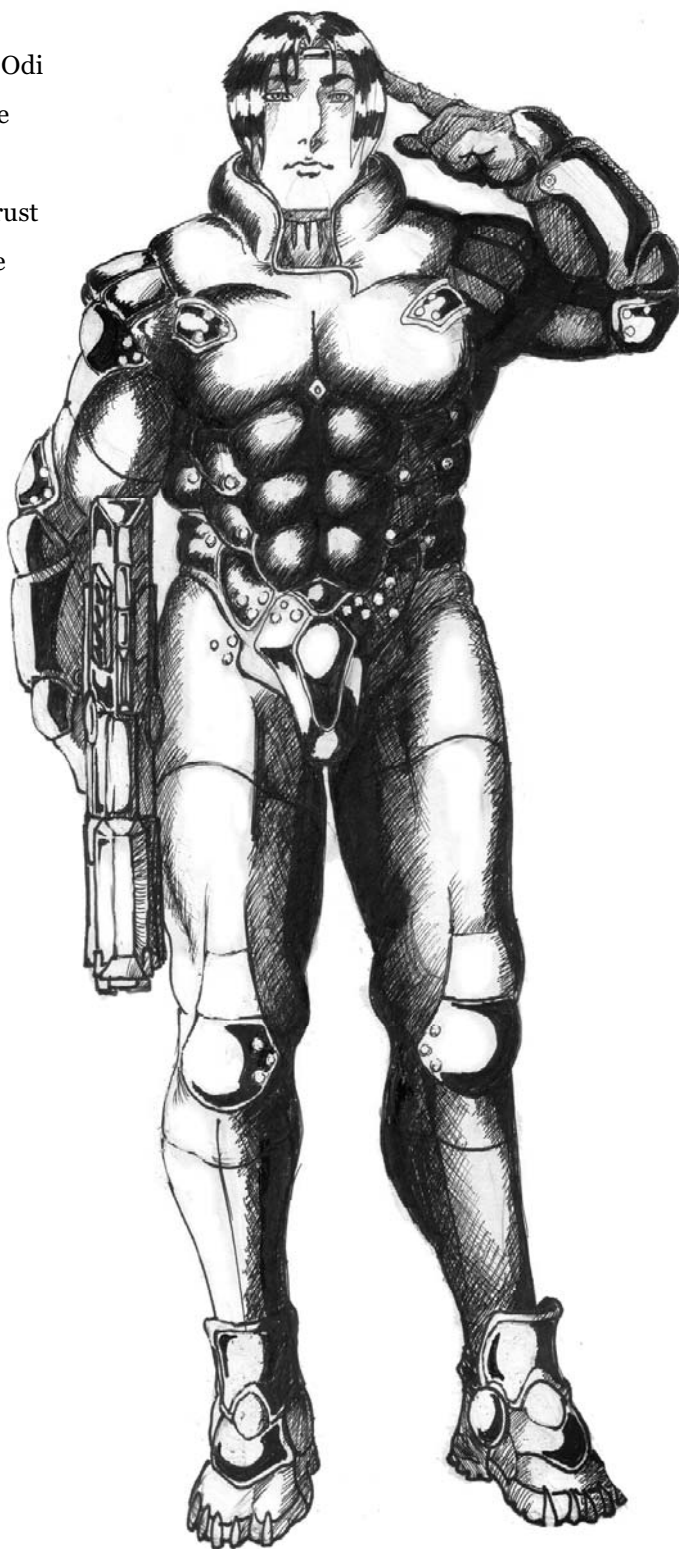
**Riki the Dark**

A mongrel, Iason's pet, and former leader of Bison—a notorious gang in Ceres.

Known as the “Prince of Midas,” Riki was abandoned by his mother when he was very young and quickly learned to fend for himself on the wild streets of the slums.

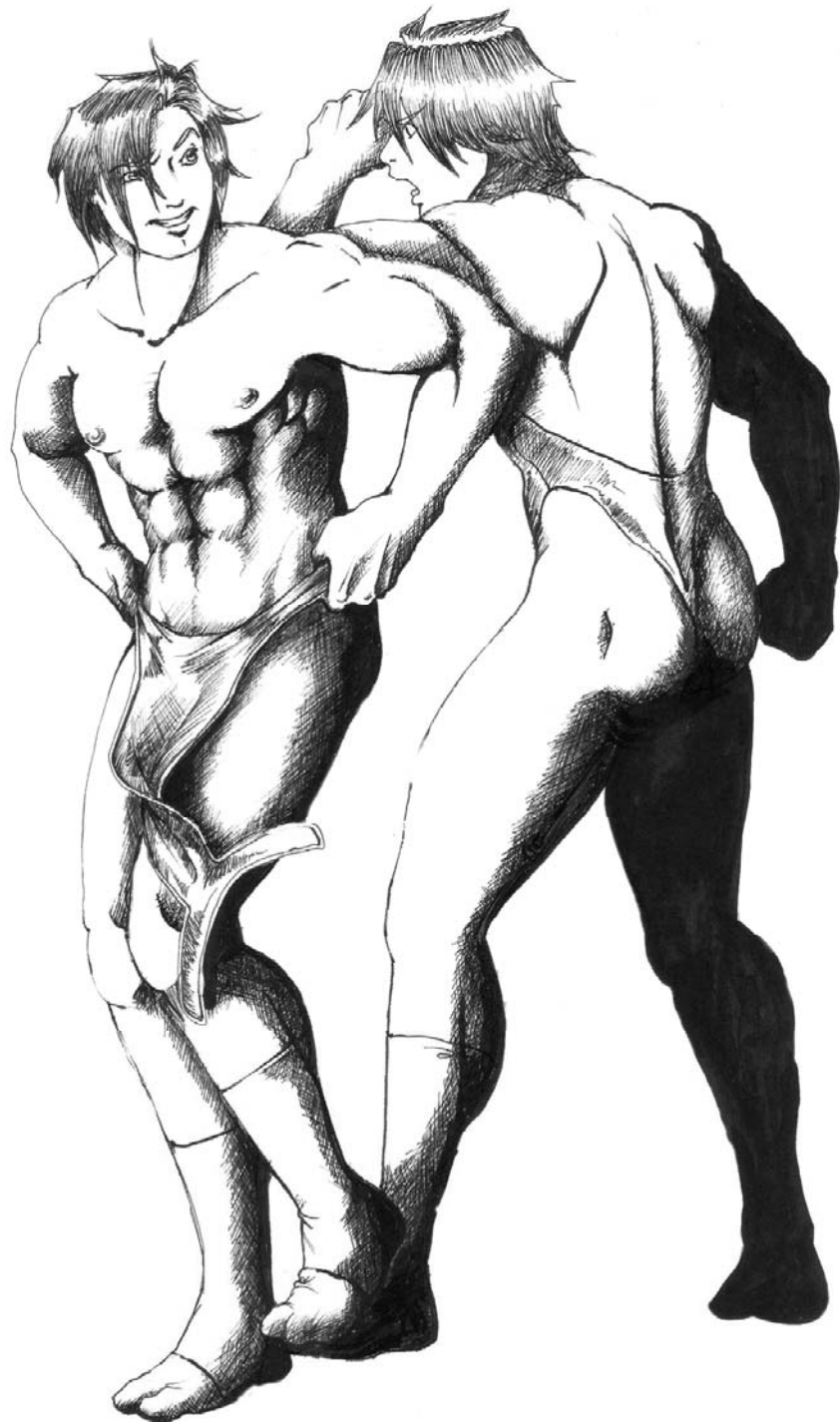
**Odi**

Iason's Head of Security, Odi is a native of Midas whose keen observation skills, intellect and general distrust of everyone make him the ideal bodyguard.



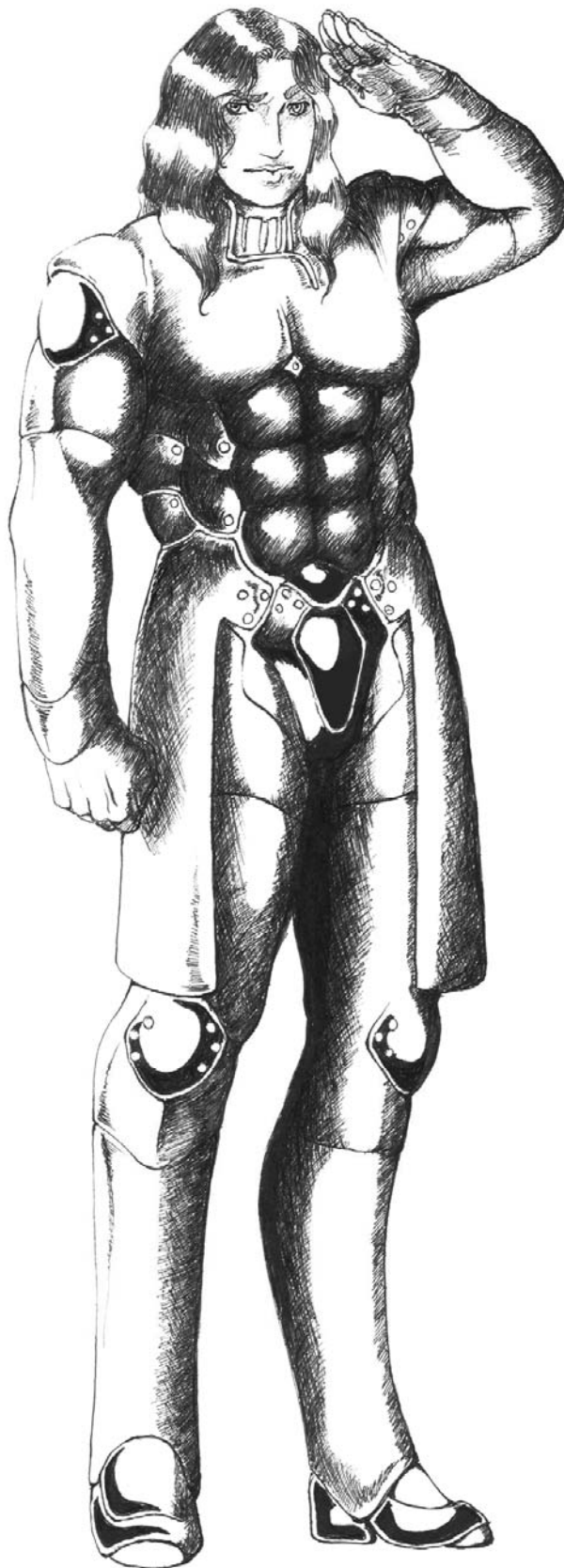
**Askel and Freyn**

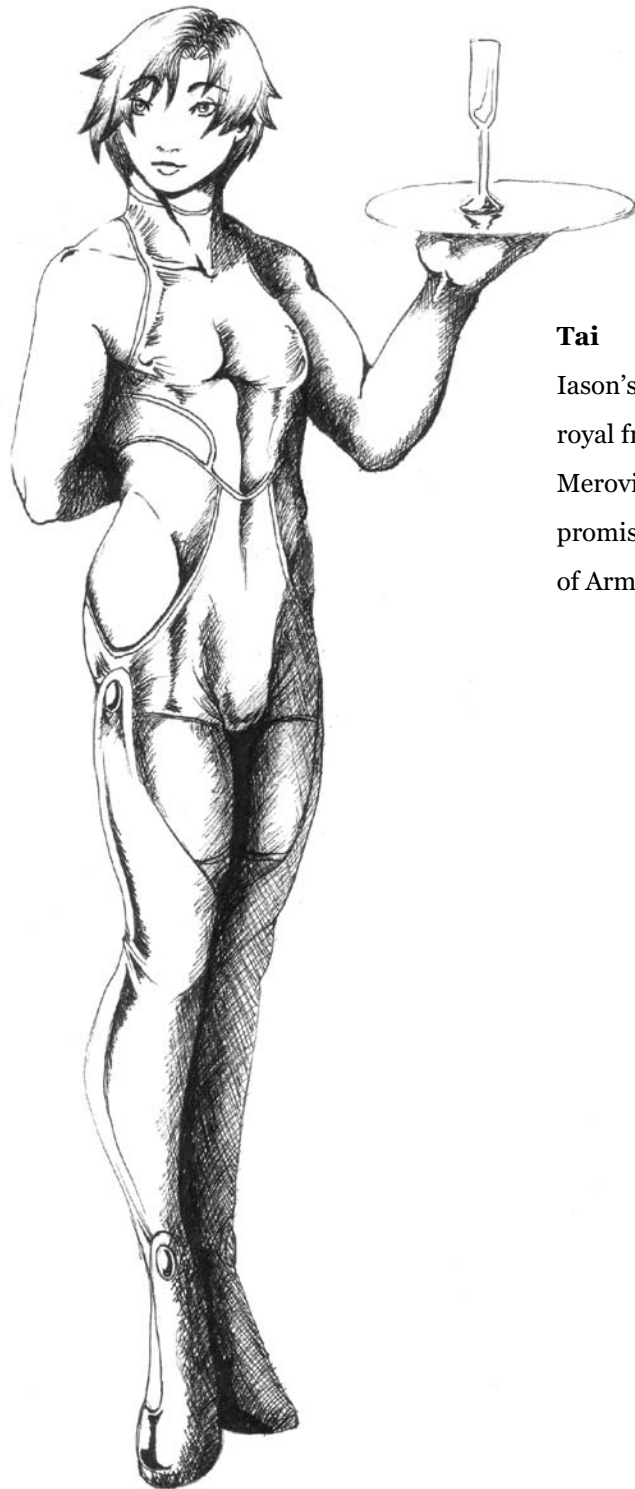
Askel (left) and Freyn (right) are fraternal twins from Midas who work as Iason's bodyguards.



**Ayuda**

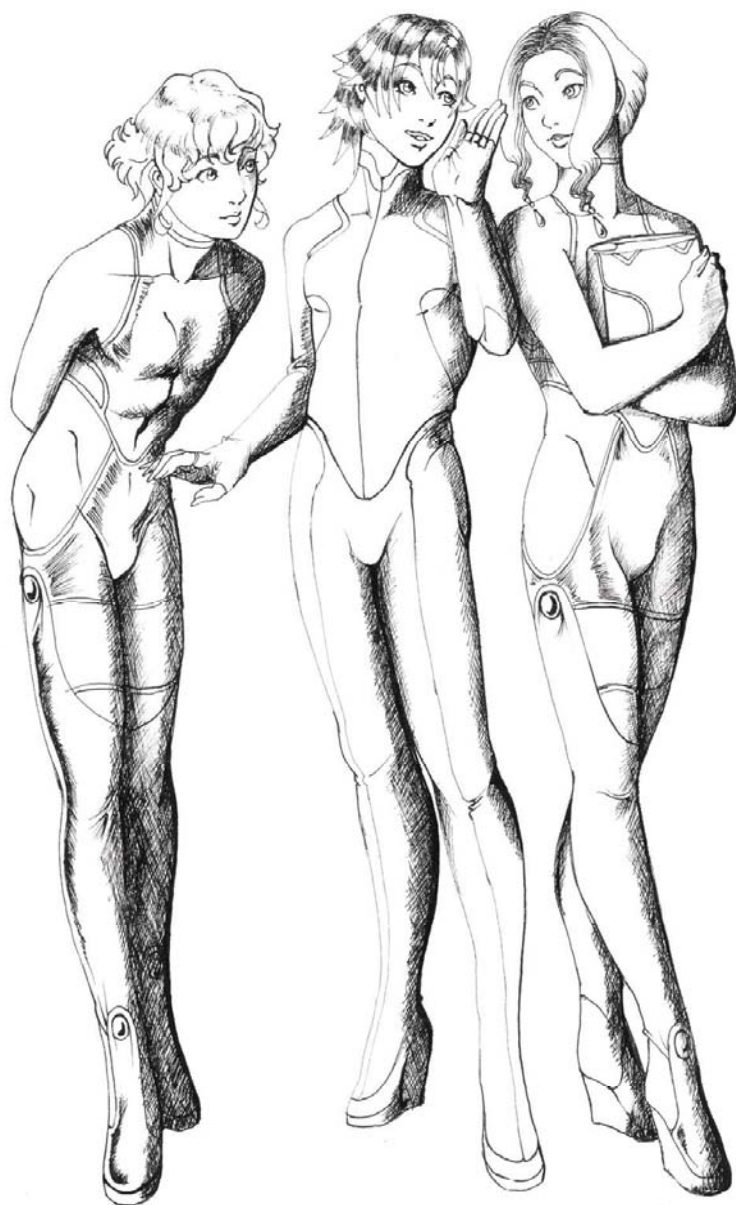
Iason's personal bodyguard, Ayuda is astute, vigilant, strong, dependable and very loyal. He would not hesitate to put his own life on the line to protect his charge.





**Tai**

Iason's chef. An Aristian royal from the House of Merovia, he was at one time promised to the priesthood of Armah.

**Toma**

Xian Sami's former attending servant, Toma eventually replaces Juthian at the Mink household. Pictured (right) with Sarius (middle) and Ru (left).

**Enyu**

A male pet given to Iason by Jupiter, Enyu is a Xeronian with a 5-day rutting cycle beginning on the new moon of every lunar month.

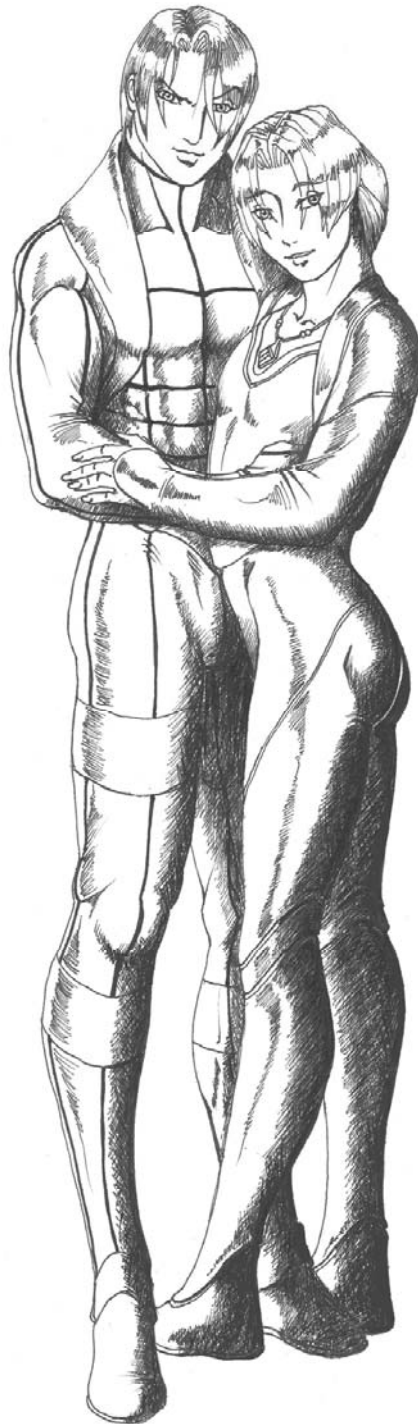


**Katze**

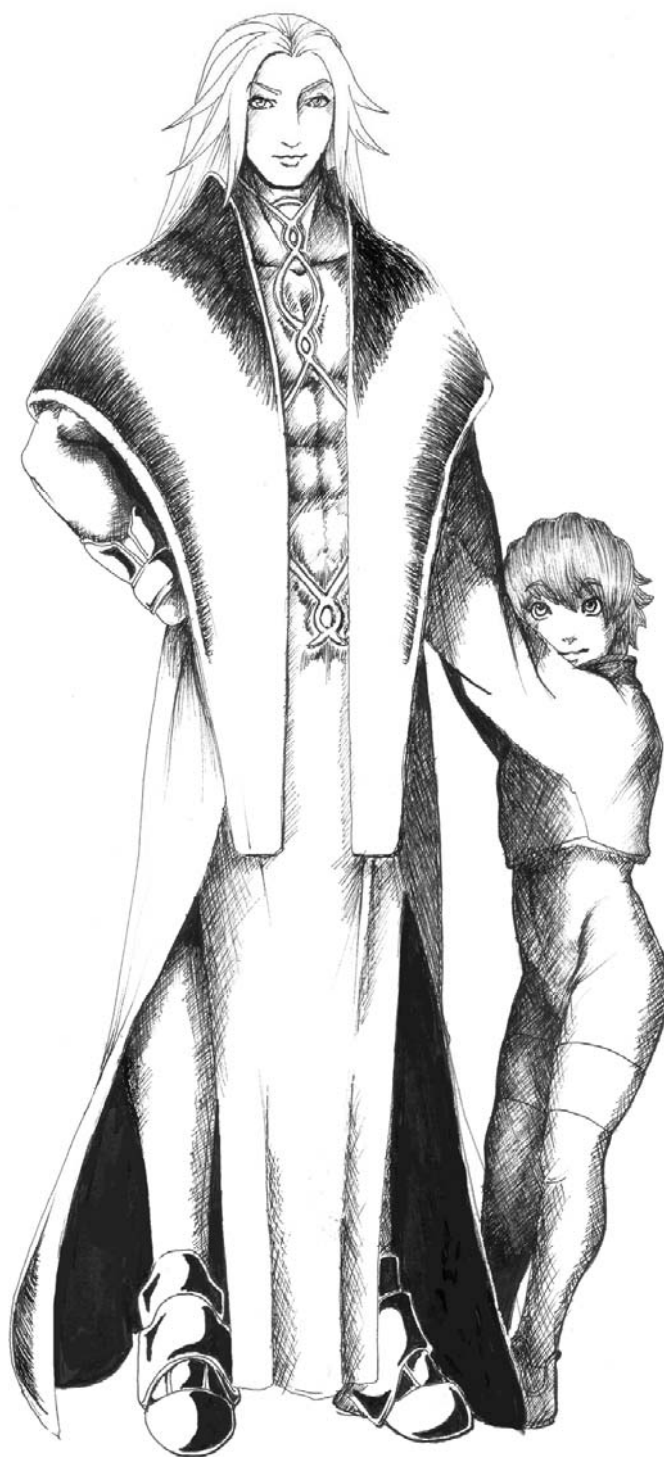
Iason's former servant, Katze (left) is a eunuch who runs the underground Black Market that serves the slums of Midas and the border planets.

**Daryl**

Iason's attending servant. Daryl (right) was once the servant of Elusius Puck, a notorious Blondie known for his cruelty to his servants and pets.



## The House of Ghan



### **Omaki Ghan**

A Blondie. Omaki (left) is the Prefect of Apatia, a province located in Midas. He is also the proprietor of the Taming Tower. Omaki is famous for courting to the tastes of more deviant Blondies.

### **Aki**

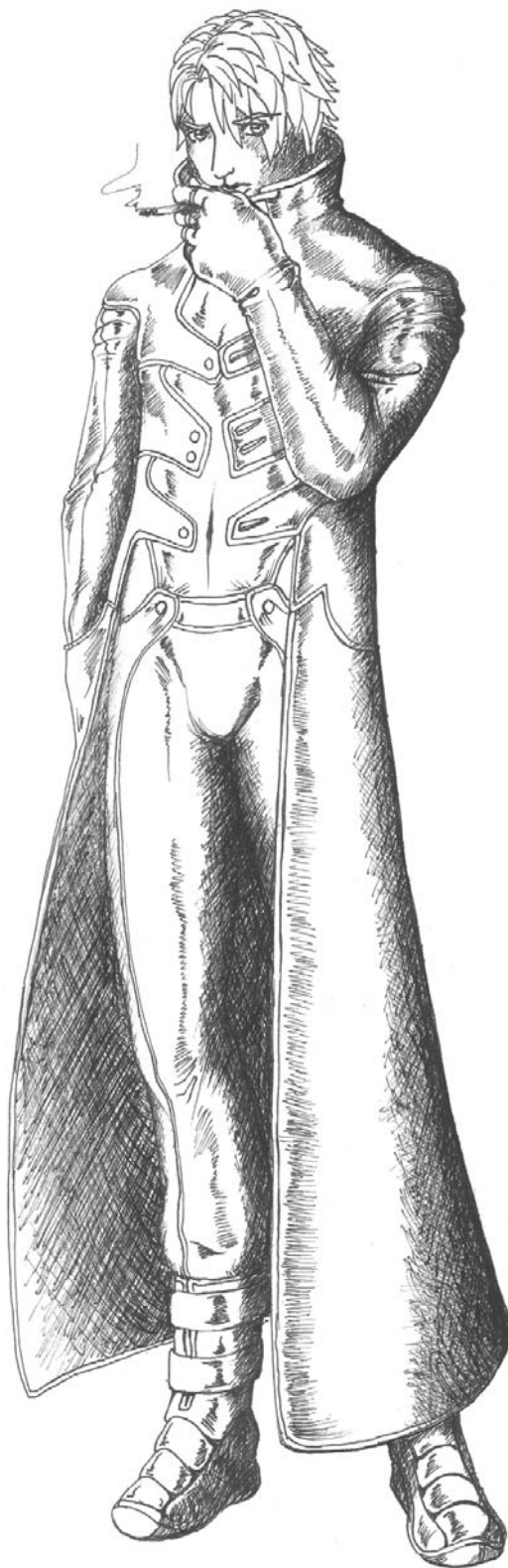
Aki (right) is a young orphan Omaki is grooming to one day become his pet.

### **Ru**

Omaki's attending servant. Ru has been with him for seven years, since the age of nine. Ru is at the top of the social world for his caste, along with Sarius, Heiku's head servant. He is an excellent cook (albeit one with a short temper).

**Kahlan**

A 17-year old messenger from the Aristian House of Tuhn who eventually comes to serve as Omaki's assistant. His family was slaughtered in the Aristian massacres.



## The House of Am

### **Raoul Am**

A Blondie. Raoul is the former lover of Iason Mink and Tanagura's most respected artist. As a disciplinarian, Raoul is also a crowd favorite at public whippings.



**Yui**

A eunuch. Yui is Raoul's loyal and obedient attending servant. He is pictured holding Pixie, a Xeronian feline that was given to him by Raoul.



## The House of Xuuju



### **Yousi Xuuju**

A Blondie. Once an extremely brilliant Syndicate apprentice, Yousi fell from grace when he very unwisely claimed Jupiter could be overthrown. As punishment, Jupiter tampered with his mind and confiscated all his assets (with the exception of his servants and his pet).

Yousi runs the Bondage & Discipline Shop in the pavilion. He was best friends with Omaki and once the lover of Heiku.

He has a pet, Arian, and two attending servants, Quin and Yura.

## The House of Quiahtenon

### Heiku Quiahtenon

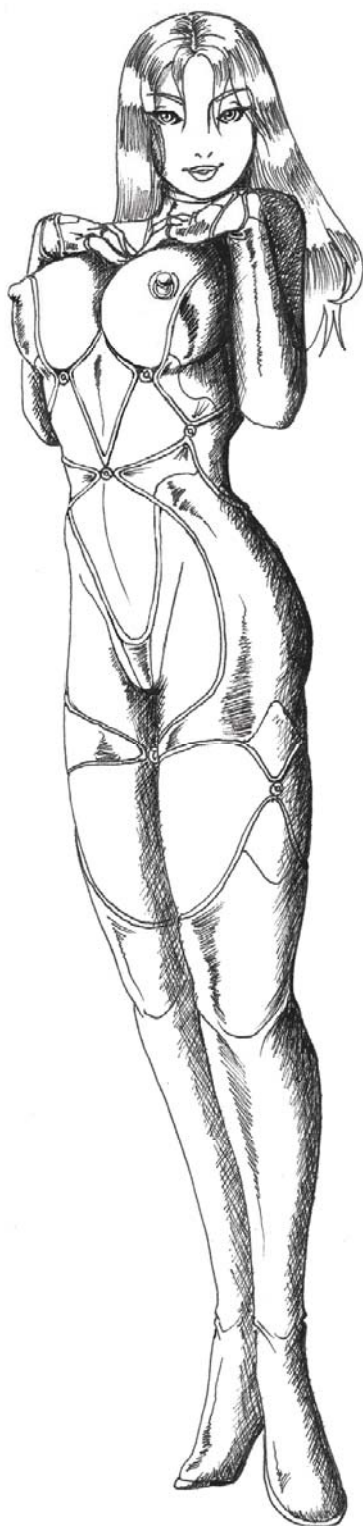
(pronounced “we ah teh non”)

A Blondie. Head of Reconstruction at Tanagura Medical. Heiku’s most striking attribute is his bionic arm, which is usually encased in a transparent outer shell, allowing the mechanical workings to be seen (pictured here with formal armor). He is fabulously wealthy and owns the Denovian Royal Suites, where royalty and ambassadors stay during their visits to Amoi.

### Sarius

Heiku’s attending servant. A notorious gossip who is good friends with Ru, Omaki’s head servant.



**Ima**

Heiku's pet. Although Ima is an A-class pet, she has a propensity for deviance. She posed in a popular though technically illegal magazine while still at the Pet Academy. Everyone seems to know this fact about Ima except her own Master, much to the amusement of the Elites.



## The House of Sami

### **Xian Sami**

A Blondie. Xian is the Prefect of Vendel. He owns the Dark Horse brothel in Apatia as well as a villa on Lake Erphanes once owned by Yousi. He is the only Blondie with golden eyes.



**Juthian**

Xian Sami's pet. He was publicly whipped by Raoul at his Master's request after disobeying Xian, then was modified and sent to work for Iason Mink.

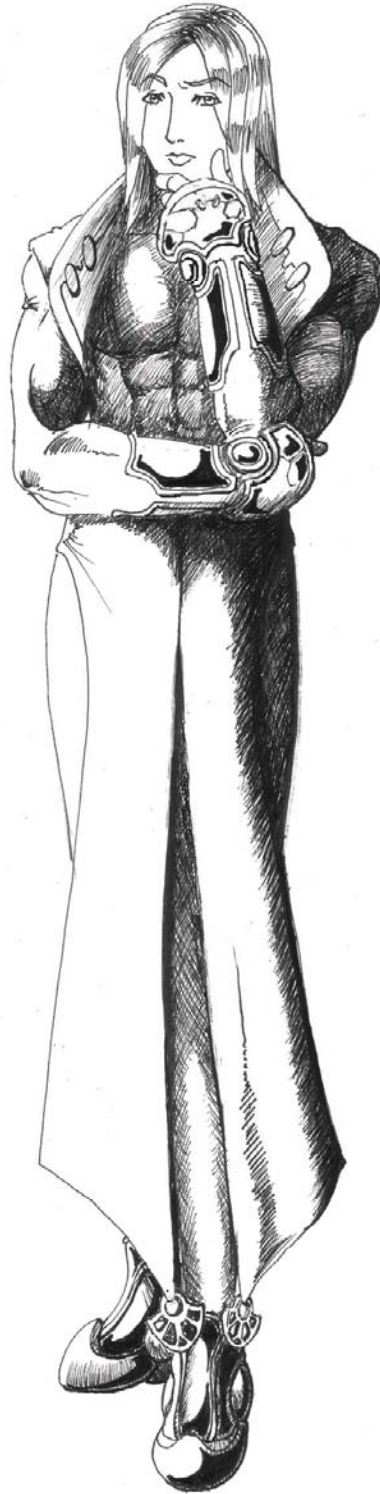
## The House of Chi

### **Megala Chi**

A Blondie, Raoul's next door neighbor. He has been in love with Raoul Am since their days at the Academy.

An outstanding architect, his buildings include the Eos Tower, the Taming Tower, and the Emporium. In his youth he once slept with Omaki in an unsuccessful attempt to attract Raoul's attention.

His pet is Shimera and his attending servant is Nomi.



## The House of Iman



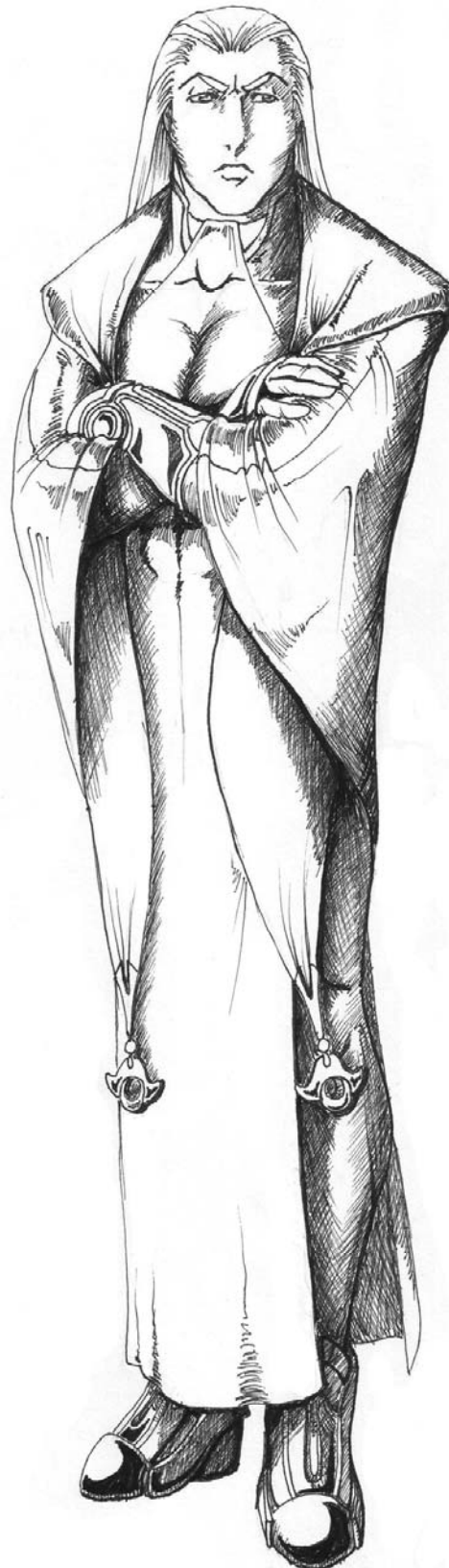
### **Yutaku Iman**

A Blondie and physician at Tanagura Medical, specializing in reconstruction, transplants and scar removal. Yutaku is a friend and colleague of Heiku Quiahtenon, and a close friend of Xanthus Kahn. He is known for his unorthodox philosophy and advocates an Amoian democracy like that established on Icaria.

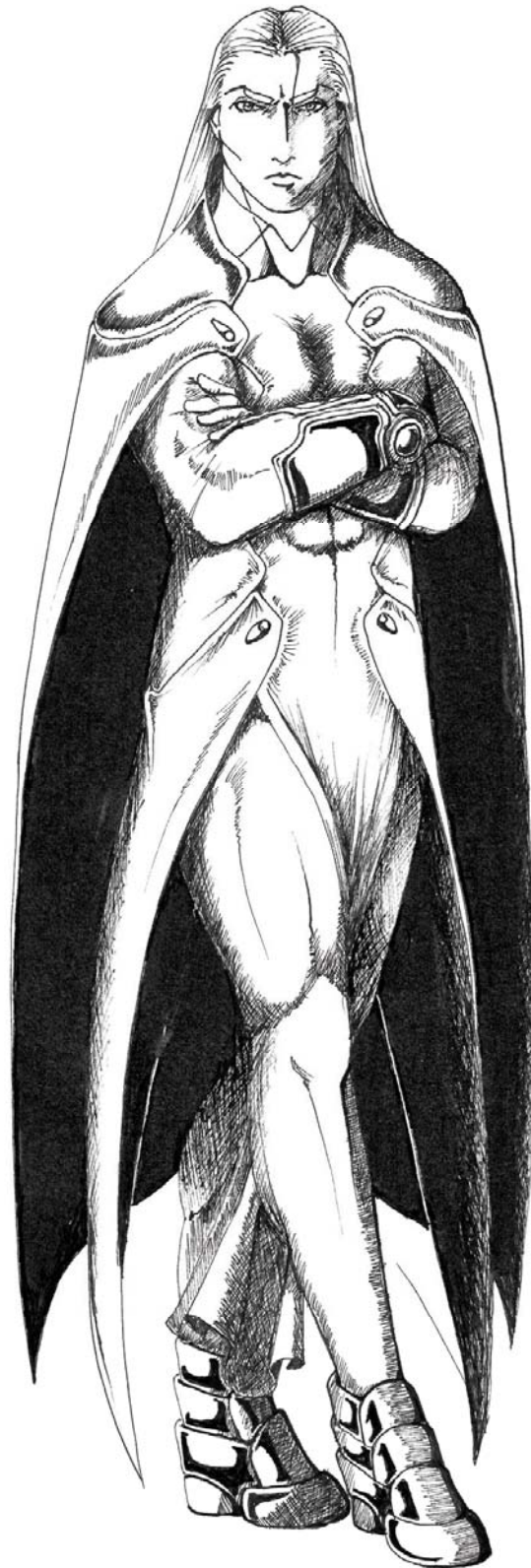
## The House of Kahn

### **Xanthus Kahn**

A Blondie. Known for his exceptional strength, Xanthus is the most feared disciplinarian on Amoi and is a crowd favorite when it comes to public whippings. He runs a fishing enterprise on the coast with a flourishing market in Midas and owns a fabulous seaside estate, built by Megala Chi. Xanthus is the Prefect of Manatung.



## The House of Sung

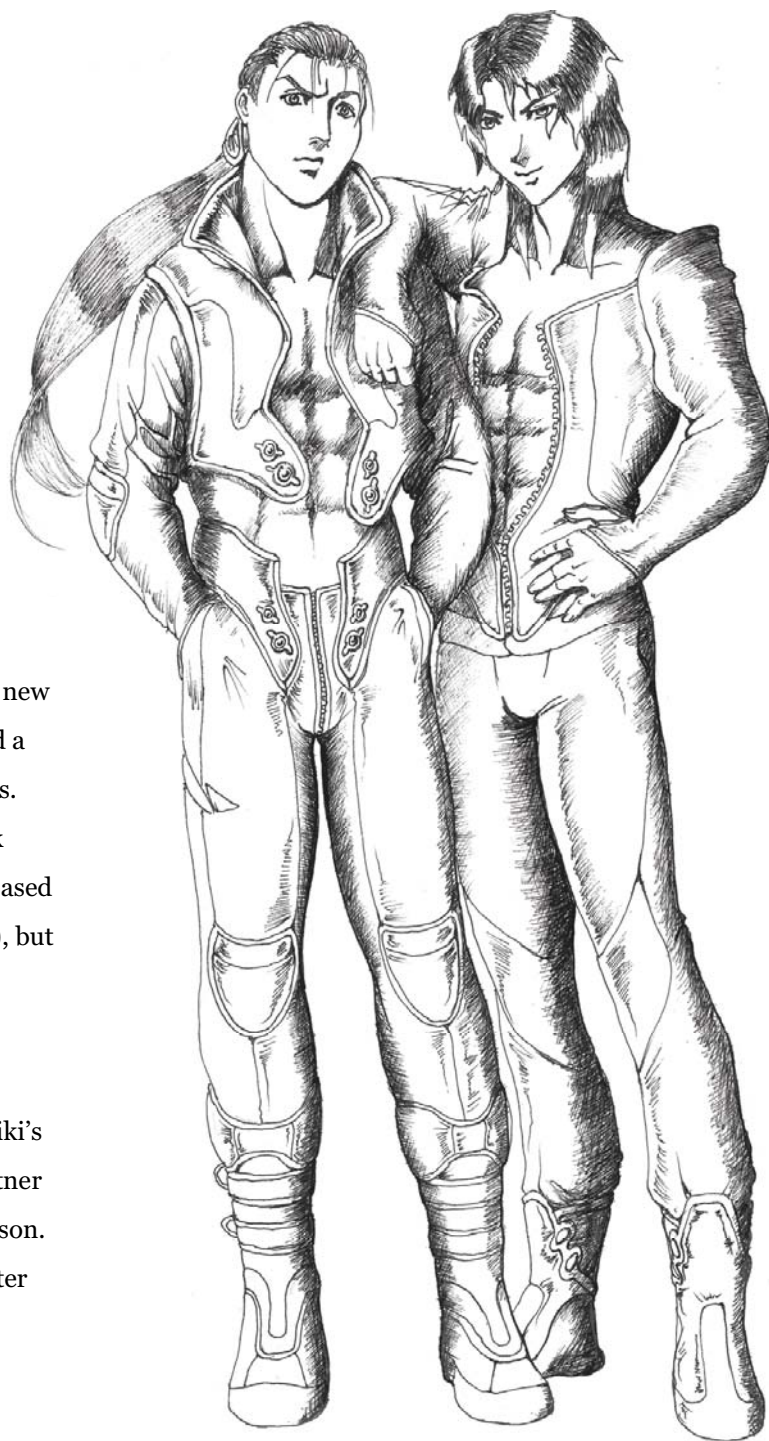


### **Konami Sung**

Headmaster of the Academy for Elites, a disciplinarian and father figure to most Blondies, including Iason Mink.



## ❧ Other Important Characters ❧



### **Kei**

Kei (right) is Guy's new pairing partner and a mongrel from Ceres. Runs his own black market in Midas (based on stolen property), but can't rival Katze.

### **Guy**

A mongrel (left), Riki's former pairing partner and co-leader of Bison. Took over Bison after Riki disappeared.



**Commander Voshka  
Khosi**

A handsome and powerful military commander famous for his many exploits and campaigns and his sudden rise to power on Alpha Zen. He is the brother of Ambassador Anori Khosi.



## ✧ Minor Characters ✧

### **Ambassador Anori Khosi**

The deceased brother of Voshka Khosi, Anori had a tryst with Raoul Am years before while staying in Iason's home.

### **Commander Kattahar**

Famous military commander from Alpha Zen, Kattahar was once the commander of Voshka Khosi. A mountain range on Amoi, formerly named the Qentu Mountains, was renamed the Kattahar Mountains after the commander was killed there on a weekend pleasure excursion.

### **Janja Urubia**

A wealthy non-Blondie Elite club owner with many holdings in Tanagura and Midas. He is the owner of the club Serendipity.

### **Kobin Nu**

A Blondie and close friend of Xanthus Kahn, Kobin runs a fishing enterprise on the coasts of Midas. His pet is Jewel.

### **Lieutenant Tung**

Commander Kattahar's lieutenant, known for the Accelerator incident that caught the commander's tent on fire.

### **Luke, Noris and Sid**

Mongrels and members of Riki's old gang, Bison.

### **Tagira Nomartsu**

Owner of the Chameleon, a trendy clothing shop in Midas.

### **Zanbar Su**

An Elite with an insatiable appetite for gossip who runs "the Channel," an audio-only gossip broadcast on an Independent frequency listened to by Elites, servants and pets alike.

## Map of Amoi



## ✧ Glossary ✧

**Academy:** All citizens attend some sort of Academy: the Elite Academy, Pet Academy, Military Academy, or the Academy for Public Service. Blondies reside at the Elite Academy in Jupiter Hall from birth. Other Elites (those with silver/grey hair) attend when they reach the age of nine. At age 12, Elites can opt to finish their education at the Military Academy to serve in the Amoian Guard. Military cadets serve an apprenticeship either in the Amoian Guard or on another planet before they matriculate. Pets are either bred by the Masters that own them, are born in the Pet Academy, or are imported from the border planet, Gardan. All non-Elite citizens who are not pets attend the Academy for Public Service, learning the trade they have been assigned to by Jupiter.

**Accelerator:** A topical medication that promotes the healing of wounds and reduces scarring through accelerated activity at the molecular level. The administration of Accelerator is very painful.

**Agatha:** A poison used during the Gang Wars. Survivors often experience excruciating headaches and reportedly see visions from time to time (called Halos). Agatha poisoning is said to enhance telepathic and precognitive abilities. See Halos.

**Alpha Zen:** A very cold but beautiful planet, with volcanoes, glaciers, boiling mud, geysers, waterfalls, mountains, and impressive fjords. Alpha Zen is a complex blend of ancient warrior cultures and longstanding traditions, city-states, and the most technologically advanced modern society in the Quadrant. The planet is known for its exports in G-wave emission technology, sex toys, weaponry, armor, cognac, brandy, taming sticks and paddles, security devices, fine art, games, and literature. It was ruled for nearly 500 years by a senatorial democracy (an oligarchy) until Commander Khosi rose to power. Ultanum is the capital city.

**Ambrosia:** An expensive cognac from Alpha Zen. Raoul's favorite.

**Amoi:** Jupiter's planet. Amoi was originally believed to be previously uninhabited before Tanagura was built. However, archaeological discoveries have revealed the existence of many thriving ancient civilizations predating Jupiter's creation and sentience.

**Amoian Calendar:** The Amoian year is 585 days long, comprising 13 lunar months, each 45 days long. The Amoian day is 26 hours long. The days of the 9-day week are: Iosday, Tahnday, Danaburn, Erphanesday, Midweek, Darkfall, Astrajia's Rest, Jupiter's Eve, and Moonday. (Iosday and Erphanesday derive their names from the legendary brothers Ios and Erphanes. Tahnday is named after the famous military commander Jun Than. Astrajia takes its name from the goddess Astrajia. Danaburn

takes its name from the site of the Revolution, Dana Burn.) The moons Ios and Erphanes share identical cycles, thus they are referred to as the “twins.”

**Amoian Guard:** The Amoian military. Anyone within the Telepsi Galaxy may join the Amoian Guard. Terms are for two years and pay well. Warriors may remain in the Guard for as many terms as they like, provided they can pass the Term Screening exam.

**Anubius:** An immense asteroid the size of a small planet in an elliptical orbit around Amoi’s sun. On its approach, every few hundred years, Amoi experiences spectacular meteor showers.

**Apatia:** A posh province in Midas where many Blondies keep their pets in private condominiums. The Taming Tower, the Dark Horse brothel, and the Denovian Royal Suites are all located in Apatia.

**Apprenticeship:** Select Blondies at the Academy are slated by Jupiter for apprenticeship, also called the “Syndicate track.” Those who manage to secure this highly-coveted honor typically work in the Syndicate with direct access to Jupiter (though only the Head of the Syndicate usually reports to her in person). The Head of the Syndicate is always selected from among Syndicate apprentices. Elites who choose to join the Amoian Guard also complete an apprenticeship with a military Commander before they graduate from the Military Academy.

**Aristia:** A border planet, Aristia is warm all year round with extensive beaches and mild weather, a favorite “vacation spot” for dignitaries from throughout the Sector. Aristia is known for its fine wines, luxurious perfumes, silks, and beautiful music, and is the home planet of Tai, who is a member of the ruling family, the House of Merovia.

**Aristian Amber Crystal:** A stunningly beautiful iridescent gem.

**Aristian Red Emperor:** An expensive, fine red wine. Iason’s favorite.

**Armah:** A deity worshipped by many Aristians, including Tai.

**Arman:** A province of Alpha Zen, most infamously known for the “midnight uprising”—a massive slave revolt that was eventually crushed by Commander Kattahar and his Lieutenants Meshka Tung and Voshka Khosi.

**Assignment:** Jupiter formally recognizes all citizens at the age of nine, at which time they receive their identification number and classification. All non-pets also receive an assignment. The assignment for non-Elites is some sort of trade or occupation, such as a security guard or a shopkeeper. Citizens do not have the option of rejecting their assignment. An assignment of “General Service” is the lowest but broadest

classification; a citizen assigned to General Service can choose from any number of occupations, including janitor, cook, driver, or attending servant. The Elite assignment is a “track” of studies that will prepare them for various high-ranking positions in Eos; the most prestigious assignment is the Syndicate Track, which gives select Blondies access to Jupiter’s mainframe.

**Astrajia:** Goddess worshipped by many on Amoi, including Katze.

**Astrajia’s Rest:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Auction Posting:** The official Syndicate listing of pets being put up at the next auction, with photographs and starting bids, distributed free of charge. All purchased pets dread the release of the posting; a Master’s announcement that he is “going to the auction” is usually a hint that a new purchase is imminent.

**Blondie:** See *Elites*.

**Broadcaster:** Spyware device that uses existing security systems, such as cameras, to relay information to a remote viewing location.

**C9000 Lightbender:** Fastest known spacecraft in the Galaxy. Travels at a rate of 9000 Cepaks/minute.

**Cepak:** Unit of distance traveled. Equivalent to about 1 *Hecatron* (50 miles).

**Ceres:** A province in Midas that is no longer officially recognized by Jupiter. It is where only mongrels live. Now a slum, Ceres was once home to the leading families of Amoi before the Revolution. Situated on the western side of Manatung Bay, Ceres is close to Lake Erphanes, where many Elite still maintain villas, but is separated from that area by a stretch of wetlands.

**Dana Burn:** Site of the original insurrection against Jupiter, Dana Burn is an abandoned shelter near the sea, in Ceres.

**Danaburn:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Dark Baccalias:** A pricey, specialty cigarette, imported from Alpha Zen; Riki’s favorite. Each pack costs about 1000 credits. Dark Baccalias offers a smooth smoke and is mildly intoxicating. Its active substance, *yutonga*, is found only on Alpha Zen and is very addictive. However, yutonga soothes cravings and addictions to other substances.

**Darkfall:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Dark Horse:** A pet brothel in Apatia (a province in Midas), owned by Xian Sami.

**Depravities:** A club/pool hall in Midas owned by Omaki Ghan.

**Denovian Royal Suites:** A posh hotel where foreign dignitaries and royalty stay when visiting Amoi, owned by Heiku Quiahtenon. Located in Apatia, the pleasure district of Midas, on the coast of the Amoian Sea.

**Echo Board:** An Alpha-Zenian device used to bypass signature security systems. The device replicates the genetic signature of the last individual to “leave” the restricted area.

**Elites:** The highest ranking class of citizens on Amoi. Blondies are considered Elites, but they outrank all non-Blondie Elites. The role of the Elites is to ensure order and stability in Amoian society and to protect Jupiter. Thus Elites control most enterprises and real estate on Amoi and serve in a variety of governing capacities. All Elites serve on some type of Council, while some Blondies serve as “Prefect” of an assigned region (a *province*, or Area). For instance, Iason Mink is the Prefect of Eos, and Omaki Ghan is Prefect of Apatia.

**E-zone:** The “red light” district of Midas, in Apatia, at the hub of the city’s night life. The Taming Tower is situated in the center of the E-zone, near the Dark Horse.

**Emission Technology:** Technology that allows a device to “emit” additional effects or substances. For instance, the MXV Emperor has six emission options—sting, G-wave, stimulant, buffer, Accelerator, and opiate release. Sting releases an irritant into the flesh. G-wave elicits sexual arousal. Stimulant releases a potent hexagon-norepinephrine derivative to revive the unconscious. Buffer provides the usual protective retracting mechanism to reduce scarring—quite an innovation for the whip, although some scarring is still probable. Accelerator applies an opiate-free Accelerator with each lash to promote healing—also quite painful. Opiate release provides variable options for administering pain relief.

**Emporium:** A recreational facility for Elites. It also houses art and museum exhibits.

**Enkephalin Meditation Spheres:** A form of emission technology that works in concert with the user’s brain waves. If the user is able to achieve a theta brain wave, the spheres trigger an endorphin release, using the body’s own natural opiates, enkephalins. The spheres are used to develop meditative abilities and are popular among the Elites.

**Eos:** The central province of Tanagura where most Blondies live and where Jupiter’s Tower, the Eos Tower and the Emporium are located.

**Erphanes:** Legendary twin of Ios. Ios and Erphanes were warriors and lovers from the

Lost Age who decided to commit suicide rather than renounce their love. According to legend, the brothers drank poison and died on the beach as the tides came in. Their souls were said to be transformed into the twin moons of Amoi, which take their names.

**Erphanesday:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**First Year:** The first year that young Blondies from Jupiter Hall attend formal classes at the Academy, at age nine.

**Forbidden Chest:** The Forbidden Chest or box is a device used by some Masters to test the loyalty of pets and their ability to obey commands in the face of temptation and curiosity. The chest was kept in a special place in the household and the pet was instructed never to open it. Any pet that violated this mandate found a message inside informing them that their Master had just been alerted of their disobedience. The technique of the Forbidden Chest is ancient in origin yet continues to be used because its deception was guarded with the utmost secrecy.

**Gamian:** A bright purple gem only found on Xeron, considered the most valuable stone in the entire Quadrant and a favorite of royalty, highly coveted by the Elites.

**Gang Wars:** A period of intense instability in Ceres not long after the Revolution, when those who had lost their citizenship—eventually known as mongrels—began fighting among themselves to survive the streets of the slums.

**Gardan:** A border planet, where the concept of “pets” originated. Gardan provided Amoi with pets long before the Syndicate was created and Amoi began its own pet auctions.

**Galath:** A distant planet, a neighbor of Alpha Zen. Its inhabitants are considered rather unattractive.

**General Code:** Created by Jupiter, the Code is a book of legal rules and regulations that bind all Amoian citizens.

**Gripping-beast:** An ancient Urasian motif that consists of a stylized beast gripping its own legs. Found in ancient artifacts and modern replicas of Urasian weapons.

**G-strap:** Punishment device used to discipline unruly pets and eunuchs. It emits G-wave technology, which eventually causes arousal in non-eunuchs. Can be used in conjunction with a D-type pet ring for enhanced G-wave stimulation.

**Guardianship:** A formal arrangement whereby a Blondie may raise the child of a non-Blondie Elite or a non-Elite. Extremely rare though the requirements are articulated in Section 116.45 of the General Code.

**G-wave Devices:** An Alpha Zen specialty, G-wave devices emit G-waves at 10,000 times the level of a pet ring or G-strap and can literally produce, in a eunuch, a replication of the pleasure achieved at orgasm. The device is strapped around the pelvis and can be fitted with “toys” or organ simulators for a more authentic sexual experience.

**G-wave Technology:** Gamma-wave emissions used in pet-rings, straps, and sexual devices. Depending on the sort of emission, these can cause pleasure or pain.

**Halo:** A vision induced by Agatha poisoning, sometimes, but not always, accompanied by a terrible headache.

**Hecatron:** Unit of measurement equivalent to about 50 miles.

**Hexagon-Norepinephrine Derivative:** A special type of synthetic stimulant that is extremely powerful. Discovered by the Amoians.

**Hiroshi's palace:** The palace of Prince Hiroshi of Xeron, where Enyu was raised.

**Holo-pic, holo-projector:** Holographic picture; holographic device that projects holographic films.

**Icaria:** A border planet. The only democracy in the entire Quadrant, Icaria was in ancient times once home to an extremely barbaric culture, the Vendi. Known to Amoian Blondies for its line of fabulously decorated whips, and for its honey, beer, and fine white wines, which are usually purchased first by Xeron and then exported to Amoi. The Icarians are afraid of Jupiter and refuse to deal directly with Amoi.

**Icarian Amber:** Iason's second favorite wine, imported from Icaria. An expensive, fine white wine, known for its mild aphrodisiac qualities.

**Icarian Gold:** A very good stout imported from Icaria.

**Independent Channel:** Used by Omaki and Heiku, among others, it is a channel for communications that Jupiter cannot intercept, thus, Jupiter cannot “listen in” on what's being said. All other channels are automatically monitored by Jupiter (there is no way to prevent this, since she controls the entire grid). Independent Channels are illegal on Amoi.

**Interceptor:** An illegal import from Xeron that blocks tracer signals within a 200-hecatron radius.

**Interstasis:** A rarely documented state of near hibernation brought on by trauma in which all metabolic processes are sluggish.



**Ios:** See *Erphanes*.

**Iosday:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Iotung:** A board-game similar to draughts.

**Juntahn:** A province in Midas, named after the famous military commander Jun Tahn.

**Jupiter:** The sentient computer that controls Tanagura.

**Jupiter's Eve:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Kasey-whips:** Stiff but flexible whips, similar to crop whips, with varying thickness. Class numbers are from 1 to 21. Lower class whips lack the more extensive buffering mechanisms to prevent scarring as well as other fancy emission technology, but the upper class numbers are thicker and more brutal. The C-20 Spider releases a poison that paralyzes the receptive parties or persons, causing them to eventually stop breathing and is used for terminal punishment. A C-21 is specifically designed to arouse eunuchs, but when used on a fully-equipped male, the end result is castration without organ removal.

**King Chunamenkahn:** Ancient Amoian king from the Lost Age said to be gifted in the art of spells and battle magic.

**Krevlians:** A cream-filled pastry typically served at breakfast.

**Krostafish:** A type of fish with sharp, vicious teeth; during the Gang Wars of Midas, some mongrels were fed to the fish to die horribly gruesome deaths.

**Kruska:** A type of decorative pond fish, usually bright red with yellow or orange markings.

**Lake Erphanes:** A deep, pristine blue lake west of Tanagura where the villas of the Elites are located.

**Lost Age:** Amoian history, pre-Jupiter. See *Minas Qentu*.

**Manatung:** A province in Midas.

**Manatung Bay:** A bay that separates Ceres from the other provinces of Midas, where the best Amoian fishing markets are located.

**Messenger capsule:** A small, cylindrical tube that contains important items, hand-

delivered by a messenger from one planet to another. Considered a formal, exceedingly polite way to deliver items and is not often used due to prohibitive costs. Another use for the messenger capsule is to bypass Jupiter's scrutiny.

**Midas:** A satellite city surrounding Tanagura. Midas is known as the "Pleasure City" and is where the Elite go for recreation and entertainment. It is divided into seven provinces: Apatia, Manatung, Juntahn, Vendel, Mistral Park, Neal Darts and Ceres. Pets are often kept in Midas condominiums, particularly in Apatia and Manatung. There are no condominiums in Ceres (the slums where the mongrels live) nor is that province frequented by Elites.

**Midweek:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Minas Qentu:** An archeological dig in the Amoian desert that uncovered evidence of ancient civilizations on the planet.

**Mistral Park:** A province in Midas.

**Modification:** The castration of a male for the purpose of becoming an attending servant. Usually the castration is voluntarily submitted to because it is considered a privilege to become an attending servant to an Elite. Modification can also refer to mind tampering, a form of punishment used by Jupiter to force deviants into neurological submission. Memories, behavioral patterns and attitudes—whole personalities, in fact—can be taken away. Raoul Am is responsible for organizing such "intervention" while Heiku Quiahtenon and Yutaku Iman perform the actual surgery.

**Molecular Detector:** A device used to determine the molecular structure of nearly any known substance, utilized specifically to check for possible poisoning.

**Moonday:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Mongrel:** A descendent of the rebels from the Revolution, a permanent group of non-citizens who are barred from Tanagura and Jupiter's favor. They live in Ceres.

**MXV Emperor.** A very beautiful, very expensive (400,000 credit) whip from Xeron. "Though Iason had never been particularly fond of whips, he had always had a special weakness for fine craftsmanship, and began admiring the imported Icarian bone handles among some of the more luxurious models, most notably the engraved and bejeweled Emperor series. The MXV Emperor, in particular, was intricately engraved with an ancient gripping-beast motif, which Iason recognized as belonging to the barbarian culture of Urasia—an intriguing replica, especially considering the fact that it had been imported from Xeron. The tiny eyes of the beasts were inset with gems—rubies, sapphires, gamians, and an intriguing, multi-colored gem Iason did not recognize." – *Taming Riki* Vol. I, Part II.

**Neal Darts:** A province in Midas. Maylord, the mongrel poisoned by Agatha who survived and developed psychic abilities, lives there.

**Off-List:** An illegal handheld device that only operates on an Independent Channel. See *Independent Channel*.

**Open Club:** A club where sexual acts may be performed openly.

**Opiate-3 (O-3):** An analgesic similar to a strong narcotic.

**Opiate-6 (O-6):** A far stronger version of an O-3, so strong, in fact, that it can kill if dosage and use are abused. Death is more likely when one drinks alcohol with it.

**Opiate-7 (O-7):** The most potent non-anesthetic opiate available, it is so valuable on the Black Market that it is even used as currency.

**Opiate-8 (O-8):** An opiate combined with a numbing agent, usually injected.

**Orange Miramer:** Beautiful tiny bird with orange plumage that only sings at night.

**Panther lizard:** A black lizard indigenous to the Yuren Oasis. It has immense, bulging eyes.

**Party:** A pet showing, sometimes involving a pairing (then called a *Pairing Party*).

**Pavilion:** An Elite market situated on the second level of the Eos Tower, where Yousi's Bondage & Discipline Shop is located.

**Quadrant:** The Telepsi Galaxy is divided into four Quadrants. Amoi, Alpha Zen, Icaria, Aristia, Xeron, and Gardan are all in the same Quadrant.

**Residual:** A frequency imprint left behind when certain types of spyware devices are used, similar to a magnetic field.

**Restoration:** Restoring a eunuch (castrated male) to a fully-functioning male. An illegal procedure without Jupiter's sanction.

**Revolution:** An early rebellion by citizens of Tanagura and Midas against Jupiter's authority. The Revolution resulted in a permanent group of non-citizens, the mongrels, who were barred from Tanagura and Jupiter's favor forever.

**Roadhugger:** Any vehicle that lacks flight capacity. Also called *hugger*.

**Scrambler:** A Xeronian device specifically designed to unscramble security codes.

Illegal on Amoi and most other planets.

**Serendipity:** An open club in Tanagura where Katze, Riki and Daryl go one night for a little fun.

**Series 6500 Stun-Pen:** A small weapon which causes temporary paralysis when deployed; the “stun” is very painful.

**Sharlingale:** A rare songbird on Amoi, imported from Aristia.

**Signature Technology:** The utilization of genetic signatures in a wide array of devices, such as security scanners, pet rings, restraints, or doors.

**Skywalker:** A hovercraft bike. Top of the line. Riki owns a Z990 model, the newest in the Skywalker series.

**Taming Tower:** The privately owned suites run by the infamous Omaki Ghan. It is a palace of punishment—a dark, but posh hotel, designed by Megala Chi, where Elites bring their pets and servants to be tamed into total submission. In the case of pets—who, with the occasional deviant exception, were typically docile from inbred controls—Elites bring them simply to unleash their own sadistic fetishes on them. It is no secret that many Blondies enjoyed disciplining their pets for no reason other than their own amusement, and Omaki Ghan caters to these Elites, offering every sort of device and assistive technology available to appeal to the dark tastes of Tanagurian Blondies. Pets slated for termination are often brought to the Tower and there typically whipped to death with a C-20 kasey. Omaki Ghan also handles the relocation of unwanted pets—the placement of older pets into brothels and open clubs and the disposal of those deliberately or accidentally killed during punishment.

**Taming Stick:** Discipline instrument. “The taming stick had no fancy technology, no protective buffering system, no variable settings—it was just old-fashioned, brutal punishment intended to be wielded without restraint, saved for the most rebellious, disobedient pets.” – *Taming Riki* Vol. I, Part I.

**Tanagura:** Jupiter’s city and home of the Elites.

**Tanagura Medical:** Tanagura’s biggest hospital, known throughout the Quadrant for its state-of-the-art medical care. Iason Mink funded the entire Children’s Wing and is the hospital’s most generous benefactor.

**Tarnacsian Cider:** The cider is a strong aphrodisiac made especially for eunuchs.

**Telepsi:** Amoi’s galaxy.

**The Chameleon:** A trendy, posh clothing shop in Midas, owned by Tagira Nomartsu.

**The Channel:** An audio-only gossip channel listened to by Elites, servants, and pets alike. The Channel was banned for a time by Jupiter but was eventually tolerated due to its unflagging popularity. It runs on the off-list frequency 507.8 with the main transmission originating from the private residence of Zanbar Su.

**Thermoscanner:** An instrument used to detect the body heat emitted by life forms and thus determine their location; can project in a 50 hecatron radius.

**T-stand:** Punishment/bondage/restraining device that restrains arms and legs spread-eagled, in an upright (standing) position.

**Tahnday:** See *Amoian Calendar*.

**Unclassified:** An individual that, for some reason, lacks an official classification (Elite, Servant, Pet). Rare.

**Urasia:** An ancient barbarian culture that thrived on Amoi 2,500,000 million years before Jupiter's awakening.

**Urus:** A second, much smaller Amoian city west of Midas. It was built by the Elites as another pleasure city—considered “safer” than Midas because it was free of mongrels, and soon attracted a steady flow of tourists from the border planets during the summer months. The city is positioned along the ocean and many Elites own beachfront property there. The city is unique in that its power source does not depend on Jupiter. The city uses Elite identification and security, though, so it remains off-limits to mongrels. Urus arose as Tanagura became increasingly crowded, but beyond Urus no other cities have been built since the rest of the planet is a wasteland. It has also become a cluster for research and development.

**Vendal Dynasty:** Ancient line of kings from the Lost Age, known for their patronage of the arts.

**Vendel:** A province in Midas.

**Vendel Park:** A park on the outskirts of Midas in the province of Vendel, frequented mostly by the Elite. Popular for its elaborate sculptures, fountains, and breathtaking gardens.

**Vendi:** A barbaric culture of ancient Icaria.

**Weenus:** Slang for *penis*. An expression used mostly by children.

**White Moon:** Iason's third favorite wine. An expensive, fine white wine.

**X3000 Holotape dispenser:** A device that projects a three-dimensional barrier wherever the tape is laid down.

**X900 Guardian:** A hovering security device capable of retinal scanning and identification processing, possessing a database of all known identifications in the galaxy. There are only five such devices in existence, each costing five million credits. From Xeron.

**Xeron:** Enyu's home planet. The hominid males have a 5-day rutting cycle. Feline males are empathic and make good pets.

**Yuntungs:** A type of fish, rolled into a biscuit and typically served for breakfast.

**Yuren:** An Amoian wasteland settlement. Yuren developed around an immense oasis of desert cacao, the source of all indigenous chocolate on the planet.

**Yutonga:** The active substance in Dark Baccalias, mildly intoxicating and very addictive. Found only on Alpha Zen.

**Zavo Vergatti:** One of Iason's favorite artists and a friend of Voshka Khosi. A "Vergatti" is a much sought after, very expensive sculpture.

**Zoto Chakra:** Clothing designer whose expensive lines are popular among the Elites.

## Appendix

Omaki's letter to Iason, Page 137

Iason,

Your box of toys as promised, as per our little arrangement.

The matter between us has been resolved—I believe to your satisfaction. I have something else of interest to you, if you are willing to pay another 50,000 credits. You might be able to guess what that is. Very interesting viewing, and it will bring back a few memories, I think? Does the phrase “Aristian virgin” ring any bells?

What did you think of my Aki?

Call me; let's go out for drinks and catch up on old times. Or if you prefer, just pay me and I'll release the footage.

Omaki

Omaki's Summons from Jupiter, Page 285

Omaki Ghan

You are hereby ordered to return your illegal pet to Midas Orphanage in Manatung. You will do so immediately. If this mandate is not met in three days, the boy will be removed from you and you will be publicly whipped for insubordination.

So ordered by Jupiter on this the 445th day of the year 5139.

Official Summons

Jupiter

Summons 745932

Riki's Credit Portfolio, Page 263

Credit Portfolio: Approved for Immediate Sale

Pet: Z107M                      Class: Unclassified/Import

Name: "Riki"

Owner: Iason Mink Residence: Eos

Credit line: Open ended; 750,000 credits available immediately.

ALERT: Identity is to be kept CONFIDENTIAL. Merchants who comply will be generously compensated. Those who disobey this mandate will be dealt with severely and personally by LORD IASON MINK.

Head of the Syndicate

Guaranteed by Jupiter

Tanagura Security System

Z107M-U/I-Eos-IM-OE-A

Yousi's Letter to Omaki, Page 379

Day 14, Month 11, Year 5134

Greetings, my dearest friend.

I hope this finds you well. If you are reading this, my plan has failed, and by now I am either dead or no longer known to you, if, as I suspect, Jupiter decides to tamper with my mind. In truth, I would rather be dead than a walking imbecile, running a smoke shop or some other hideously degrading occupation. So I hope you are now reading this and remembering me as your former friend, who has since passed from this world. If not, Sweet Mother of Amoi...please be so good as to shoot me in the head.

As I write this, I have set into motion a chain of events that will result in



this package arriving to you on Amoi if I am not, for whatever reason, able to put a stop to it, exactly five years from the date of this letter. I have done this so that something of great importance may come to you, my dear friend, who alone I trust on this barren planet, to take whatever action you deem fit.

You are holding in your hands my logs, which will explain to you why I believe that Jupiter can be brought down. Please understand this: since you are reading this, what you are holding was deemed dangerous enough by Jupiter that I am now no longer with you. Perhaps it is best that you simply destroy the logs. But I leave that decision to you.

I will always remain your eternal friend.

Yousi

PostScript: As I write this I am looking at the holopic you made when the three of us took that Aristian virgin. The look on Iason's face is priceless. I think he felt sorry for her. Is he still Jupiter's golden boy? If so, Iason will be key...you cannot go against Jupiter without him.

# TAMING RIKI

VOLUME 1 - PART 3

問  
の  
楔



きら たけのうち

## KIRA TAKENOUCHI

Order Now at [www.kirafics.net](http://www.kirafics.net).



Order Now at [www.kirafics.net](http://www.kirafics.net).

*In the*  
*Headmaster's*  
*Chambers*



Kira Takenouchi

Order Now at [www.kirafics.net](http://www.kirafics.net).

